$1.75

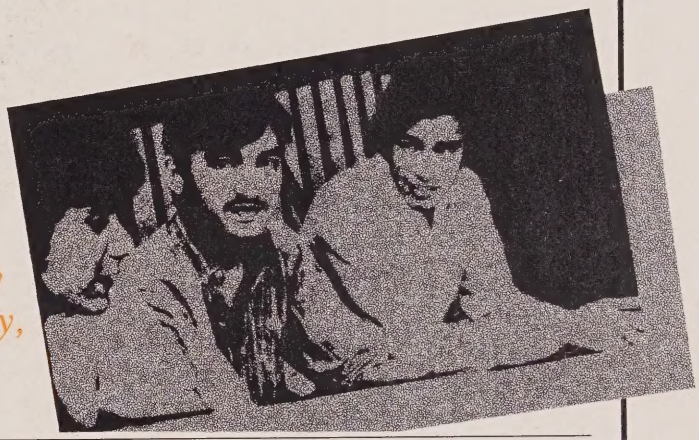
THE ASIANADIAN

AN ASIAN CANADIAN MAGAZINE VOL. 5 NO. 4 APRIL/SPRING 1984

C O M M U N I T Y

Indo-Canadian Students

Talk (very !) candidly about their community, parents, struggles and hopes.



by meena dhar

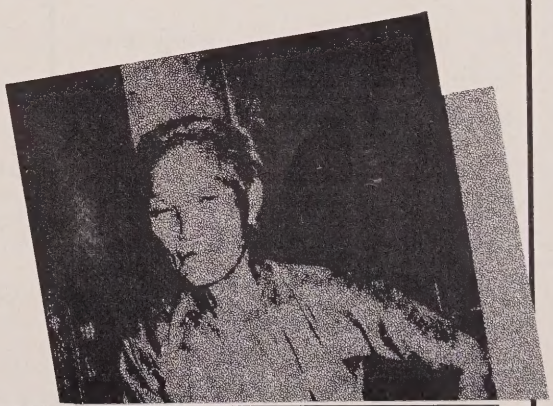
Women Helping Asian Women

How Pushpa was rescued from a life of exploitation by a group of concerned women.

by garry engkent

Visiting - a story:

A son's fan gwei ways and a mother's sense of hon yren lai.



Toronto Sun gets Dubious Award...Tips on Community Organizing...Gay Asians...

AN INVITATION

ASIANADIAN RESOURCE WORKSHOP (ARW): WHO IS WHO IN ASIAN CANADA

ARW is compiling a WHO IS WHO of Asian Canadian professionals, artists, academics and community workers.

We will be pealed to receive suggestions. We need the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Area of Expertise
- Qualifications
- Major tasks or projects completed.

Contact **Asianadian Resource Workshop.**

WRITE FOR THE ASIANADIAN

The **Asianadian** welcomes submissions of:

- critical essays
- community news
- personal experiences
- social research articles
- reviews
- short stories
- poetry
- letters

concerning the Asian experience in Canada.

Manuscripts will be returned if accompanied by a stamped self addressed envelope.

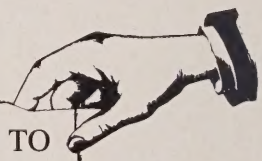
Submit your manuscripts to the **Asianadian**.

PROMOTE THE ASIANADIAN RESOURCE WORKSHOP IN YOUR COMMUNITY

We can help your organization with:

- speakers
- research material
- co-sponsorship of community oriented programs
- liaison with other Asian groups.

Contact **Asianadian Resource Workshop.**



SEND YOUR ART WORK TO THE ASIANADIAN

We are looking for:

- photographs
- pen and ink drawings
- cartoons
- sketches
- abstract designs

depicting the Asian Canadian experience. Art work will be returned if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Write to the **Asianadian**.

TYPESET BY MOVEABLE TYPE

VOL. 5 NO. 4 APRIL/SPRING 1984

CONTENTS

FEATURES

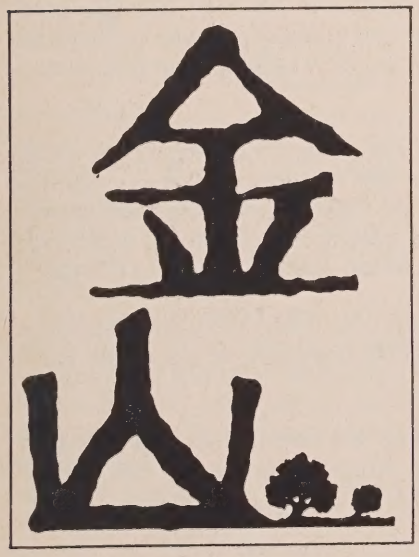
3 INDO-CANADIAN STUDENTS
In Search of Community
by V. Padmanabhan

9 GAY ASIANS OF TORONTO
by Richard Fung

13 COMMUNITY ORGANIZING
How To Do It
by Bobby Siu

18 WOMEN HELPING IMMIGRANT ASIAN WOMEN
by Meena Dhar

25 VISITING
A Short Story
by Garry Engkent



DEPARTMENTS

2 EDITORIAL

11 CONTRIBUTORS
READERS' DIRECTORY

12 POETRY
Forty Beats
Reconciliation
by Sally Ito

24 DUBIOUS AWARD

30 LETTERS

Editor for this Issue: Satish Dhar
Production: Momoye Sugiman
Mina Wong
Diane Yip

Staff:
Project Manager: Syed Uddin R.A.
Administration: S. Paul Apacible
Promotion: Nancy Chan
Graphics and Layout: Karen Wu

The Asianadian: An Asian Canadian Magazine, is published quarterly by the Asianadian Resource Workshop, P.O. Box 1256, Station 'Q', Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2P4, Canada. Copyright © 1984. All rights reserved. Contents may not be reprinted without prior permission.

ISSN #0705-8861. Second Class Mail Registration Number 4438, Toronto, Canada. The Workshop is a non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible. Printing is by Weller Publishing and Cathay Printing. Typesetting by Moveable Type. Financial assistance from the Government of Canada under the N.E.E.D. program is gratefully acknowledged. The opinions expressed in this issue are not necessarily those of Asianadian Resource Workshop.

EDITORIAL

Community and Identity

"I kept asking myself: am I Canadian or am I Indian", says Rana, one of the students interviewed for the article in this issue entitled "Indo-Canadian Students: A Search for Community". Rana is talking about an identity crisis she experienced in high school. She goes on to say "Then I went to India and that transformed me. I got a better idea of who I was".

Rick Shiomi in the last issue of Asianadian (Vol. 5, No. 3) says much the same thing about his trip to Hong Kong and Japan: "I felt this tension released – the tension of being a visible minority".

From Taber, Alberta Sally Ito, whose poems are featured in this issue, writes: "I only became aware of myself as a Japanese Canadian last year after a trip to Japan".

It is very interesting that the three individuals mentioned here should have had to go back to the country of their ancestors to get a sense of themselves. While they remained in Canada – they were confused about their identity. For a lot of Asians in Canada society at large is so alienating that they do not feel quite at home here even though many have not known any other society. They are constantly reminded, subtly or otherwise, that they are the "other".

Given such a cultural and social environment, we Asians, as well as other minorities, are forced to reconstruct our identities and our communities, often from scratch. We are forced to answer questions such as: who are we, what is our collective identity, how do we relate to a society in which we are the "other".

In answering these questions for ourselves and building communities where such answers have validity, we are engaged in very painful but creative struggles. While members of the mainstream society are spared the painful experience of asking these questions, they are also deprived of the opportunities for creative living which such questioning brings.

This issue focusses on Asians working collectively, in community groups and associations, to deal with the real life questions of our existence in Canada.

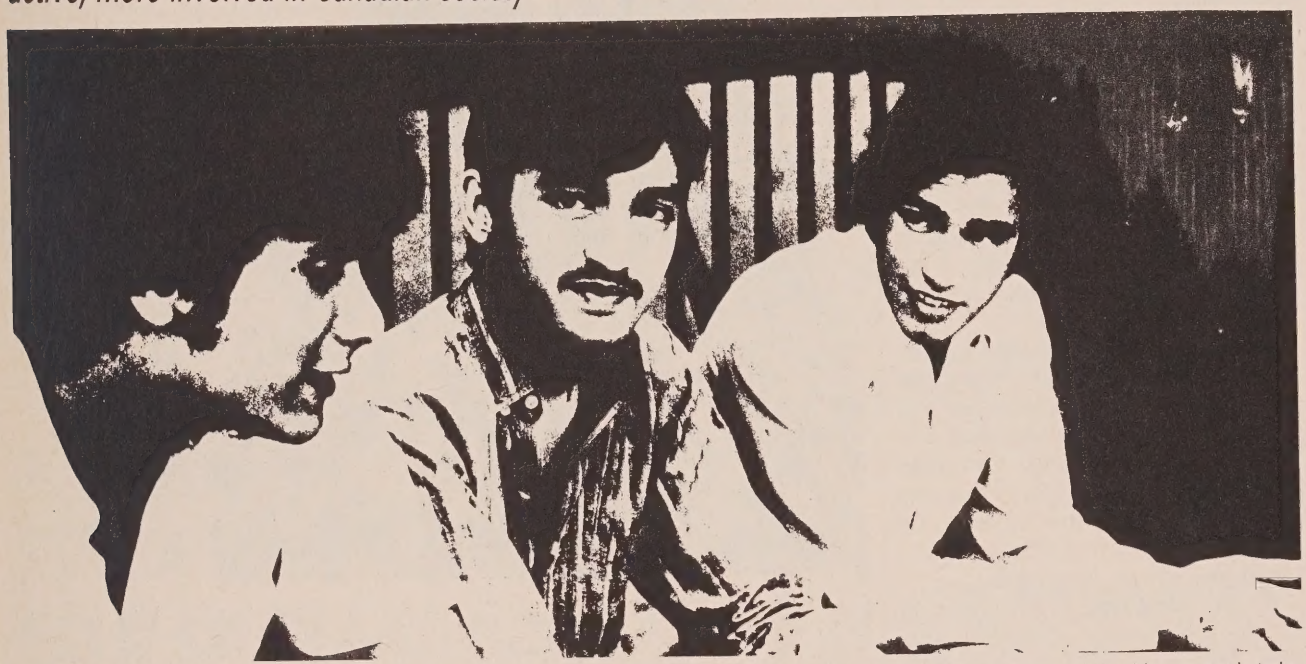
As these groups mature and grow, they will help us feel less alienated from this society. Once that begins to happen, people like Rana, Rick and Sally will no longer have to go "home" to find themselves. "Home" will be right here in Canada.

INDO-CANADIAN STUDENTS

A SEARCH FOR COMMUNITY

by V. Padmanabhan

"I had hoped the ISA would build unity among Indian students and extend this unity to the Indian community helping it to become more active, more involved in Canadian society."



The following is a transcript of a free-wheeling interview with five members of the Indian Student's Association at the University of Toronto: three of them girls: Christine, Rana and Judy, and two boys: Harcharan and Om.

Actually Om (not his real name) was not part of the original discussion group. I met him separately. Because of the personal nature of his revelations he doesn't want to be identified.

All the ideas and opinions expressed here are personal. They, in no way, represent the position of the Indian Student's Association as a whole.

The Asianadian would be glad to publish further discussion of the issues covered in this interview. So write us: use a pseudonym if you wish to protect your identity. We'll respect your desire for confidentiality. (The photographs accompanying this article are not those of the interview participants).

ASIANADIAN: *Why did you join the Indian Student's Association (ISA)?*

CHRISTINE: I am a Goan Catholic, born in Pakistan. When we came to Canada people here automatically assumed we were Moslem. When we spoke English without the usual South Asian accent they would look at us, puzzled. Then having a Portuguese surname like Pinto, when people expected Khan or Mullick, didn't help either. (Goans are residents of Goa, a former Portuguese colony on the West Coast of the Indian subcontinent. It was annexed to India in 1961 – ed.)

I guess we didn't seem to fit in anywhere. So I thought the ISA would give me a place to fit in. I don't feel I have fitted in completely in the ISA even now. But I feel I am more comfortable here than in any other association on campus.

A: *Why do you feel you don't quite fit in?*

CHRISTINE: I find the Indian girls very different from me. They can't leave home without being subjected to many questions or talk freely with guys. The guys too are different from those in my community. For instance, a couple of times at ISA meetings I have offered tea to some guys. I realized afterwards that they thought I was making a pass at them. Sometimes, when new members come to meetings and I give them a welcoming smile and say hello, as I have been taught to do by my parents, some of the guys think I mean more than that.

I am not used to that, because in our community – the Goan commu-

nity – the guys and girls are not like that.

I am beginning to realize that there is nothing strange about their behaviour. But that Moslem and Hindu culture is different from Catholic culture – at least Catholicism as it is practised in my community. I don't mean our differences are because of religion. It's just different upbringing.

JUDY: Ever since I was in school I have wanted to work with minority groups trying to raise the consciousness of the general public. I thought it would be worthwhile to do the same thing through the ISA.

You see I come to the ISA from a slightly different background to that of most of its members. I am Anglo-Indian and have special problems to overcome.

When I was younger I felt a great sense of shame that, being an Anglo-Indian, I didn't consider myself Indian (an Anglo-Indian is one of mixed Indian and European parentage – ed.). I didn't have any understanding of the culture, the history and most importantly, didn't know any Indian language.

At the same time I never felt part of the mainstream Canadian culture. And my attempts to associate with other Indians caused me a great deal of frustration and disappointment because I was viewed as somewhat of an oddity. I was not traditional and I didn't fit in. And I suppose I didn't like the very traditional ways in which they would relate to me.

It seemed as if Indian males didn't quite know how to relate to females who were as outspoken and assertive as them. They interpreted outspokenness as an overture. And some of the females were caught up in trying to fulfill the quiet, passive, pretty girl role that they were expected to play.

HARCHARAN: Well, let me see – why did I join the ISA? I found that I was very upset by the attitudes of males from India to women. I'd be sitting in the subway and there'd be this Indian girl who'd been raised in Canada. And there'd be this Indian male, who you know had just come off the boat, and he'd just be staring at her. I'd think to myself: Are all these people idiots – don't they know you shouldn't stare at people? That you should treat people as people.

"I joined the Association to build a new Indian identity. People see Indian culture in really superficial terms such as in dance performances, costumes,..."

And then I met kids at university who talked about going to India to get themselves 300,000 rupee brides.

RANA: (interrupting) These people, who said this, did they grow up here?

HARCHARAN: Yes, some guys who are raised here, in Canada, see marriage as a 300,000 rupee dowry. And they are not joking. They mean it. These are people who came from India when they were 8 or 9 years old. It's sad and you wish they hadn't brought their values here.

To me marriage is very important and you don't go into it because she happens to be fair skinned, from a good family and with a 300,000 rupee dowry. It's such a materialistic status-conscious attitude.

I joined the Association to find out whether the males who think like this and the ones I saw on the subway were the only kind of Indian males produced. I wanted to see if there were any positive values among Indians.

You see, I have never been to India. And until my parents came to Canada from Britain I had not met many Indians, apart from some Sikh relatives.

RANA: I joined the ISA to help build a new Indian identity or to bring out the Indian identity that exists but which does not seem to come out. I felt that people see Indian culture in really superficial terms, such as in dance performances, the costumes, the socializing and the food. To me that sounds so superficial; it's not the true Indian identity.

A: *Have you seen expressions of this "true Indian identity" anywhere?*
RANA: Well, I went to India last year and I came back feeling very Indian. I found that there is a different value system in India compared to here. I found people in India more hospitable, more trusting, more caring.

I realized that the Indians who have come to Canada have lost certain aspects of their heritage.

Also, until I came to University, I had only one Indian friend. So I wanted to get to know more Indians, find out what they thought. And I feel there are certain subjects, ideas, jokes which you can share with other Indians. It's very sensitive, just a feeling. It's not very concrete, but you know the other person understands.

OM: I wanted to find out if other Indian kids had the same problems as I do and whether they feel the same way as I do. I wanted to find relationships, friends, people I could trust.

My problem is that between my parents and me there is a large gap. They don't trust me, I don't trust them. They think their children are going to become drug addicts if they stay out and mix with other people.

Their main concern is to pursue the immigrant dream of making it. They think every one is out to get them – and they think you should get others before they get you. To them keeping face and honor in their community is the most important thing.

My value system has more to do with human relationships. And so when your value system conflicts with that of your parents, you have a difficult problem.

I found that many of the people I talked to in the Association felt the same as I did. Once you get to know the kids a bit and get past all the *macho* talk – you find there is a lot of conflict down inside.

Basically you can't agree with many of your parents' values. But you don't want to let them down.

I know that these conflicts are not unique in the Indian community. Other kids are going through the same thing in the context of their culture: for instance Chinese kids, East European kids.

A: *Do others among you feel that there are certain values the older generation in your communities hold which you do not share?*
CHRISTINE: I guess the elders in my community feel that being Catholics and speaking English makes us better than other Indians. It's really very sad and I wish we could convince them that such beliefs are meaningless.

When I joined the ISA my parents were almost dismayed. I could see they were thinking – why is she doing this? Why doesn't she stay within the boundaries of our own Goan community? And when I tell them about my Hindu, Muslim or Sikh friends – they don't seem to understand why I need to meet them. It's not that they are prejudiced. It's just they don't seem to understand.

I don't think the older generation in our community is unique in this. Other Indians seem to feel the same way. For instance the more people from India that I meet the more I realize that Christians are considered at the bottom of the Indian culture.

I wish people of our parents' generation would be educated so that they don't teach their children these things. Parents cause a lot of problems.

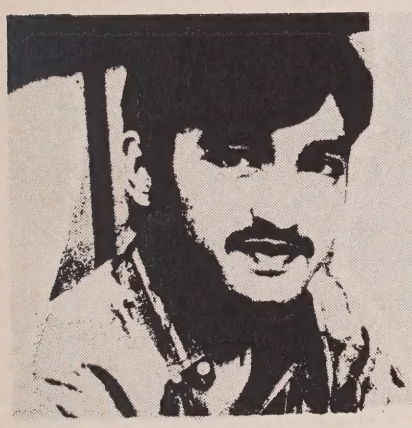
OM: I sense that in my community they feel other Indians are inferior. They feel the same about blacks. When I was growing up I wasn't allowed to have friends outside my community, black or white. I remember I couldn't bring an English friend home – we used to meet in the garage. On another occasion, more recently, I took a black friend home. My parents subjected her to third degree interrogation. She'll never come back.

Once when I told my dad that I wanted to date, he threatened to throw me out of the house.

I think Indian girls have a very difficult time here. A lot of them are kept very dependent on their parents. They are made to feel they can't succeed on their own.

There was an Indian girl I knew –a sort of relative. This girl had grown up in Canada. She had gone to school all the way up to grade 11. Her parents were really worried that she would get herself a Canadian boyfriend.

So they took her with them to India and got her married there. After get-



"My problem is that between me and my parents, there is a large gap. They don't trust me and I don't trust them."

ting married she and her husband came back to Canada.

A couple of years ago she got a divorce. It had got so bad they were fighting physically. Her husband couldn't understand where she was coming from. She, on the other hand, could not understand why he was demanding all these things from her. Why did he not allow her to go to work? Why did he not let her have any opinions of her own?

There was another girl I knew. She was also packed off to India to get married. When she came back to Canada she went to another extreme. She became the ultimate Indian housewife. So when her husband got involved in a little bit of shady business, she didn't assert herself and say stop. She could have.

My parents see all this happening. And yet my sisters will have to go through an arranged marriage.

A: *It seems to me every Indian community in Canada thinks itself superior to every other Indian community. What about the Anglo Indians, Judy?*

JUDY: We are no exception. People in my community definitely feel a great prejudice against other Indians. They feel they are superior. If I had been raised in India I would have considered myself to be a member of a privileged class.

But here in Canada going through the school system I realized I was at the bottom. As a result I found myself identifying more and more with other minority students who were experiencing similar problems. And this helped me overcome a lot of prejudices I felt towards other minorities.

A: *What was school like?*

JUDY: For me elementary school was difficult. I came to Canada when I was ten and was put in grade four. Grade four to grade eight were the hardest. After that I didn't care as much. High school was easier because I made friends with others who were like me – the odds and ends, the rejects.

"I wish people of our parents' generation didn't teach their children these things."

CHRISTINE: I think Judy and I felt the same way. School was hard for me.

I used to wish I was pure Sikh or pure Hindu or pure something. It's because you don't want to explain to everyone you meet who you are. Both Indians and Canadians are confused by the Goan identity. You can see it right on their faces – they are trying to figure out where you are from. It's very annoying – they don't take in what you are saying – they just keep looking at you. You always want to feel that other Indians accept you – but you are never sure.

I remember my social science teacher, when I explained my background, telling me that I was a strange one. She told me that right in front of the whole class and the class decided I was, indeed, very strange.

RANA: All through school I felt ostracised. I had one or two good friends, but I was not what you'd call a popular person.

Some of the preconceptions people in school had about Indians was that they smelled of curry or that they were stupid. I didn't want to be called stupid. That's one thing I wouldn't allow, because that was in my control. So I studied a lot. I defended myself in that way. I got the highest marks. So they called me "browner". I had to be called names. I couldn't get away from that.

I went through a major identity crisis when I was in Grade 11. I kept asking myself: Am I Canadian or Indian? It just built up ever since I came to Canada at the age of ten. I used to wear *kurtas* to school because it made me feel more Indian.

Then I went to India and that transformed me. I got a better sense of who I was. I didn't have to search any more. Till then I had carried with me this utopian idea of India: that is where I belong, that is where I came from.

When I went to India I felt a sense of belonging – I saw those millions of brown faces and it was great. I was one of them.

And then I came back to Canada. Now I really don't think of my colour anymore.

Originally, when I went to India, I had thought of staying on to go to University there. But it didn't work out. I am glad now that I didn't stay on. Because I like what I turned out to be. I am not saying this with any sense of vanity. It's just that I feel at peace with myself – in the sense of being Canadian or Indian.

I believe now that it doesn't matter

what you are, what you are made up of. It's the human quality – it's what you think. That's all that really matters. It sounds like a cliche, but basically that's what it comes down to.

A: *We have talked so far about your search for identity and what urged you to join the Indian Students Association. Can we now talk about the ISA itself?*

JUDY: Well, I only joined the Association in September 1983. I don't know much about what happened before that. I believe the ISA started about eight years ago. But in the last three years it has been defunct. What happened in September last year was that some people who were involved in the old Association got together and decided to revive the ISA. These people announced that a meeting was to be held, and anyone interested should attend. The response was great. Some forty people showed up at the meeting.

At that meeting the people who had called the meeting talked about what they would like the Association to do. Also that a general meeting and elections would be called within a couple of weeks.

CHRISTINE: Most people at this meeting stressed entertainment, meeting with each other, social activities, parties, dances, films, sports. That sort of thing.

JUDY: Throughout the meeting there was no mention of anything particularly Indian or educational or political. As a result a few of us got together: Rana, I and a few others, and decided that we wanted to get involved in the ISA and broaden its perspective.

RANA: At the general meeting, six executive positions were created and people were voted in to those positions. The positions are responsible for the various activities conducted by the Association. Judy is responsible for Education Committee and I work with her on it. The other positions are responsible for sports, entertainment, finances, etc.

"I kept asking myself am I Canadian or am I Indian?"

The main activity of the Education Committee so far has been to show progressive Indian movies such as *Subah, Aakrosh, Bhumika.* Today we had a panel discussion on the Indian Identity in Canada.

The ISA has held several functions: we celebrated Diwali (a Hindu festival), in November, held a dance at Christmas and we also celebrated Guru Nanak's Birthday (Guru Nanak founded the Sikh religion in the sixteenth century).

JUDY: There have been many problems with the Education Committee. There is a tendency in the ISA to avoid anything political. As long as you call your activities social or cultural you are alright. But not political. Even those responsible for the newsletter have been warned against printing anything political. And then they've been told: you can write anything about India but don't criticize it.

A: *Are we saying that the Indian students do not find any commonality of interests related to their position in this society or university?*

JUDY: Amazingly so. In fact you have some Indian students, brought up in Canada, saying about Indian visa students, that they should be charged higher fees. That they come here and take the positions from Canadian students. That they are artificially driving up the grade point average. That's because Indian visa students are more serious about their studies. You would be too if you had to pay $6000 in tuition fees!

HARCHARAN: I think the students in the University of Toronto are generally apolitical. Indian students are not unique in this.

JUDY: For a lot of people the ISA is a club. The people you are meeting today are active in the Education Committee. In fact the Education Committee is a very minor portion of the ISA. We are not very representative at all of the ISA membership.

CHRISTINE: For most people the ISA is like a shelter where you just go in and out. And you don't feel the need to build too much inside it. You just want to stay in from the cold. It's not as if the rest of society is like an animal, wanting to eat you up or something. It's just that you want to go in for a little while, feel comfortable and come out again and explore.

A: *What's the composition of the ISA?*

JUDY: It's mostly made up of undergraduate Indian students who

"When I went to India I felt a sense of belonging – I saw millions of brown faces and it was great. I was one of them."

have grown up here. There are a few Indian visa students in the ISA but they're graduate students and don't participate much in the activities of the Association.

A: *Ideally, if you had your way what would you like the Association to be?*

RANA: When I first decided to run for office in the Association, I thought about that. I wanted it to be a very active vibrant group of people who would change the image of Indians in Canadian society.

CHRISTINE: I think it's doing fine right now. I like the idea that it helps me to meet more Indians. I like the experience of it.

HARCHARAN: I don't know. To me it's more of an experiment.

JUDY: I had hoped that ideally the ISA would help to develop some kind of national identity and consciousness among Indian students. When I say national identity, I am thinking of pride and responsibility towards other Indians; that the ISA would help towards overcoming the tremendous divisiveness among Indians – the feeling that one Indian community is superior to another Indian community.

And I was hoping that we would discover more about each other and in that way become more unified. That we would take this unity and extend it to the Indian community at large, working with it and helping the community become more active, more involved in Canadian society.

FRIENDSHIP

From every seed of friendship you plant, a tree grows and the tree bears golden fruit for you to gather. Start today to plant the seeds of friendship. Make friends, keep friends, for friendship is the best thing in the social world. Be a real friend to as many people, as are deserving of your friendship.

Life is like some rich mosaic made of many beautiful parts. Across this mosaic grows the reflection of friendship, man's gift to man. There can be no real social happiness without friendship. For friendship is the flowering of the social instinct, the finest and most inspiring product of social life.

Time, that makes all things ugly, makes friendship beautiful. Life can offer no greater gift than friendship. A friend is the rarest treasure you can possess.

Lenore G. Apacible

GAY ASIANS OF TORONTO

by richard fung

Was there a "gentleman's agreement"? Would the crowd turn on me?

Last year I got to know a gay man, a student from Osaka. I noticed that almost all of his friends were Chinese and asked him about it. He answered that in a North American crowd he panicked if he couldn't find an Asian face. They didn't have to be Japanese, Any Asian gave him the same sense of security. I thought his response strange until recently, on a visit to Florida, I realized that on a beach three miles long, I couldn't spot a single non-White person. At first, I was shocked and angered that this would be the case in a state with a substantial population of Blacks and Hispanics. But then the paranoia set in. The usual arrogance of American youth seemed more pronounced. Was there a "gentleman's agreement?" Would the crowd turn on me?

For anyone who would question the existence of a gay Asian group, this feeling of ethnic paranoia, sensitivity to racism, racial solidarity or whatever you may call it, covers half the equation. The fact is, that with the exception of those who pass, or those who try so hard to pass that they deny their own feelings, non-whites and immigrants are continually aware, made to be aware that we are different; that we are the "other".

For gay people this feeling of difference is compounded by the fact that most of us do not appear any different from heterosexuals, the result being an enforced invisibility. History is constantly revised to give the impression that homosexual behaviour is a Western import to the Third World, denying the fact that it

is institutional homophobia which came with the spread of European colonialism. Even today, when famous figures like Yukio Mishima, Andre Lourde or James Baldwin come out, it is either sensationalized and used against them, or more often, avoided altogether by critics who prefer to think the better of them.

In recent years, the Gay Liberation movement has gained a lot of ground. But the spokespeople have almost always been white men. This has reinforced the presumption among gays and non-gays alike, that women and non-whites are, unless otherwise made painfully obvious, heterosexual. A lesbian friend of mine tells me that she now refuses to wear her native Punjabi clothes to lesbian bars or meetings. People look at her skeptically and she is just not trusted. When a representative of the Gay Asians of Toronto went to make a presentation to a gay group at the University of Toronto, someone spotted him waiting for the meeting to start and told him that the Chinese Students Association was meeting on the second floor. This presumption of sexual orientation according to ethnicity is also a problem within our own Asian communities. My lesbian friend also refuses to come out to the Indian community in which she works, because of the homophobia there. The invisibility continues.

This resulting cultural schizophrenia, the tug-of-war between one's sexual and cultural identities is something experienced by almost all gay people of colour. It is one of the main problems Gay Asians of Toronto (G.A.T.) was formed to deal with. The other goals were to pull gay and lesbian Asians out of invisibility, to research the rich gay Asian history, hardly touched by Western researchers and to interact with similar groups in North America and in Asia (gay groups have surfaced in Japan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan and India).

Now, four years after its founding, the group has about 120 members, it is producing a regular newsletter (in English and Chinese) and puts on an annual celebration that includes everything from demonstrations of Tai Ch'i, to political dance sketches, to drag performances of Hong Kong pop songs. The group has also recently received a grant of $2,500, from the Gay Community Council to produce a videotape on lesbian and gay Asians.

The task of organizing such a group has its setbacks, however. Among most historically disadvantaged groups there is a lack of experience in organizational skills, writing, speech-making. Nevertheless, more important is something which mainstream gay groups have failed to comprehend – that a white person can come out, give up family and friends if necessary, and still have a whole world to move about in. The non-white person, by doing so risks losing access to major sources of cultural validation and support in a racist society. The resultant hesitation to come out has meant a shortage of public speakers and a reluctance to write and even to sign cheques on behalf of the group.

A non-white gay person by coming out risks losing access to major sources of cultural validation and support in a racist society.

Nevertheless, the stronger the group becomes, the more support its members feel and the more willing he or she is of taking risks. When Alan Li gave the principal address at Lesbian and Gay Pride Day, two years ago, he stressed the fact that without the personal support of the group, he would never have taken such a step.

The other problems faced by G.A.T. are those which are endemic to all pan-Asian and gay groups. There is the old problem of inter-ethnic chauvinism, prodded by the fact that Chinese and Indians are treated differently in our society. Though the group was founded by a Filipino, an Indian and two Chinese, the make-up is currently almost all Chinese. Even so, it is always necessary to pay attention to the cultural differences between Chinese from Hong Kong, South East Asia, the West Indies and Canada.

Another setback is that the group is almost totally male. Sexism on the part of gay men is not the only reason for this. The oppression felt

by gay men of colour is simply much greater for lesbians, who find it more difficult to gain economic independence, and for whom social independence is not so readily accepted by family or society in general. This means that priorities for gay men and women are often different. Nevertheless, there is a constant effort being made to integrate the group both ethnically and sexually.

A lesbian friend of mine tells me that she now refuses to wear her native Punjabi clothes to lesbian bars or meetings.

No group operates in a vacuum and both the setbacks and gains made by G.A.T. depend not only on the hard work of its members, but also on the receptiveness of mainstream gay and Asian community organizations. The video grant from the Gay Community Council is important as an indicator of the gay community's growing awareness of the needs of non-white lesbians and gay men. It is also worth remembering that the initial spark for G.A.T. came from an article, *Out of the Shadows*, on being gay and Asian, written in 1979 by Gerald Chan, in the 'Sexuality' issue of *Asianadian*.

CONTRIBUTORS

Lenore G. Apacible has a Business Administration degree from the University of the East, Philippines. She is presently a student at the University of Toronto and an active member of the Sampaguita Cultural Heritage and Civic Organization, a Filipino community association.

Meena Dhar is on the Board of the Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre. She is an urban planner with the City of Toronto and a free lance graphic artist.

Garry Engkent, a naturalized Chinese-Canadian, was born in Canton and immigrated to Canada in 1953. He teaches English literature at the University of Alberta.

Richard Fung is a member of the Gay Asians of Toronto, He is a frequent contributor to the *Asianadian*. He is studying Film at the University of Toronto.

Sally Ito is a nineteen year Yonsei from Taber, Alberta. She says "I only became aware of myself as a Japanese Canadian after I spent a year in Japan last year."

V.Padmanabhan is a free lance writer from Toronto. He writes about the problems of Indian immigrants in Canada.

Bobby Siu was a founding member of the Riverdale Action Committee Against Racism. He has a Ph.D. in Political Sociology from Carleton University.

Jin Tan teaches at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto.

Jack Seto is a free lance photographer from Toronto. He is a member of the Chinese Canadian National Council and Canasian (an Association of Asian Canadian Artists based in Toronto).

READERS' DIRECTORY

University Settlement is a downtown community centre. It provides support and services such as: housing and tenant problems, a day-care centre for children, information and referral services, senior citizens program, teenager activities and music school for children and adults. English classes for Chinese speaking immigrants are given. These programs are supervised by concerned volunteers with professional staff members. Call 598-3444. Located at 23 Grange Road, Toronto M5T 1C3. (Dundas and University)

Bloor Information and Legal Services can help fill out government forms like OHIP, Unemployment Insurance, Canada Pension and Old Age Security. Counselling and problem solving done. We are a community legal clinic – please call us first at 531-4613.

Citizenship Intergency Project for South-East Asian Newcomers provides Canadian citizenship education classes for people in their native tongue in various locations in the City of Toronto. Call 598-3519 for further information.

Federation of Chinese Canadian Professionals Legal Branch offers a free legal clinic for people every Thursday at 6 p.m. at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St. Call 598-2022.

Parkdale Community Legal Services Inc. is a storefront law office providing FREE legal help for low-income Parkdale Area residents. WE CAN:

- represent you in everything from simple legal procedures to arguments before the Supreme Court of Canada.
- provide materials informing you of your legal rights in several different languages.
- provide speakers to talk about the laws which interest you.

We specialize in areas of family, consumer, landlord/tenant; and welfare, unemployment & workers' compensation, immigration, traffic and minor criminal matters. If unable to help you, we will refer you to a lawyer or clinic who can. 1239 Queen St. W. Toronto M6K 1L5. Call 531-2411.

Study Japanese at the University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies. Evening Program. Summer Intensive Program. Spring Speech Contest. Call 978-2400 for more information.

THIS DIRECTORY IS OPEN TO ALL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS OFFERING SERVICES, GOODS AND EVENTS OF INTEREST TO THE ASIANADIAN READER. THERE IS A MINIMUM CHARGE OF $10 FOR THE FIRST 50 WORDS, THEN 35¢ FOR ANY ADDITIONAL WORD. YOUR ENTRY WILL BE PUBLISHED IN FOUR CONSECUTIVE ISSUES. CALL 591-1625 TODAY.

POETRY

by sally ito

RECONCILIATION

I saw two Chinese girls conversing,
Their smiles reverberating
Through the white masses in the school library.

Must we reconcile with Buddha
Who, so long ago, was borrowed from someone else?
The library book beckons return.

The peaked temples monitored by computers.
Rubber, plastic, all fabricated fish
But the library books only show old Fuji.

I stumble with the language
Of foreign lips on a familiar face
The numerous and aged characters still borrowed.

The pachinko lights flash;
The old Kyoto men shrug hopelessly
But I hate them, soon they will be dead.

And when I have placed the book on the shelf,
I go home to thick, red steak
And eat it happily with borrowed soya sauce.

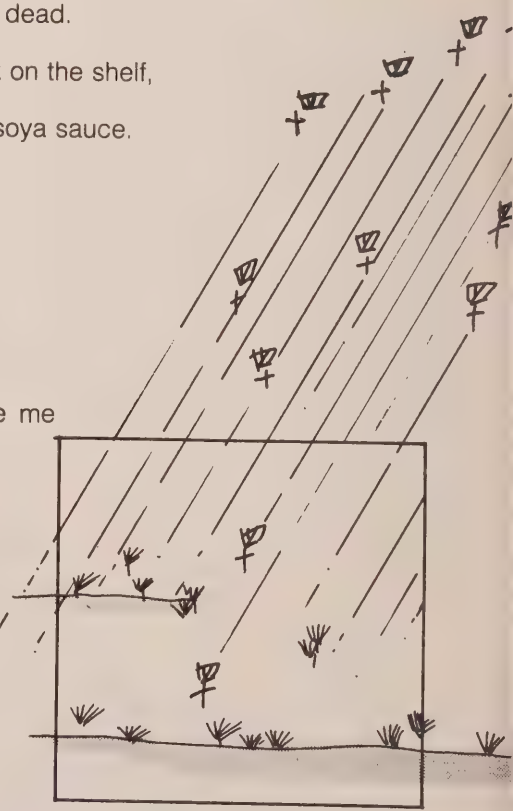
FORTY BEATS

Forty beats of Asian music
pound on the ceramic tiles above me
in steady syncopation.

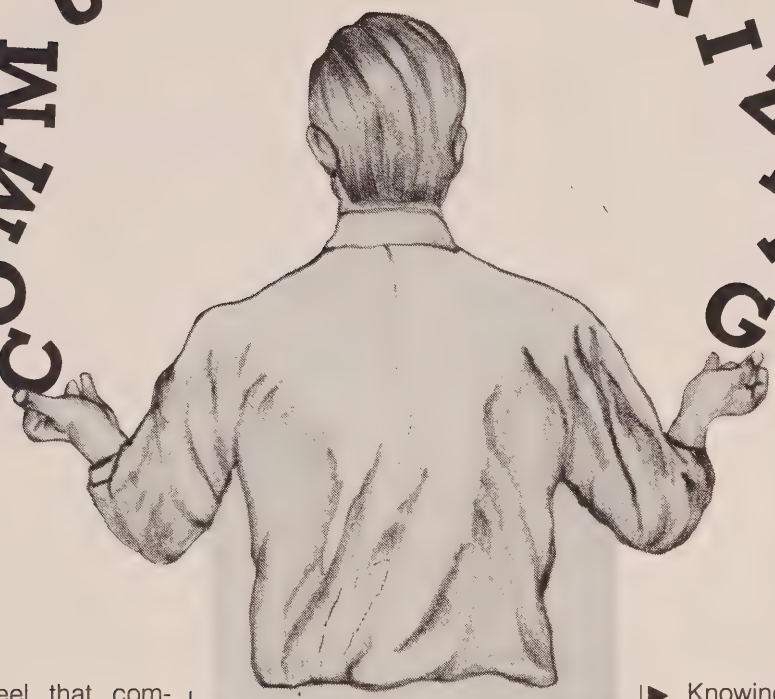
Forty bamboo canes
meet skin with a harsh slap
in panicked meditation.

Forty repeated Chinese characters
imprint their syllables in my ears
in forced memorization.

Forty days have I sat here
contemplating my culture
in the rain.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING



HOW TO DO IT

by bobby siu

Many people feel that community organizing is a waste of time, a thankless job, and a tiresome task. But I can think of many good reasons why community organizing is not only important and necessary, but also quite urgent.

- Community development: at the present stage, minority communities remain fragmented within themselves and among each other. There is competition and conflict within ethnic communities. Furthermore, few dialoguing mechanisms exist among ethnic communities. In addition, a large segment of people remain isolated from one another. Community organizing pulls people together, and enables them to transcend the existing state of affairs.
- Building political clout: unity and cohesiveness among racial minorities means political strength. When we minorities learn to unite, politicians and business people will take us seriously.

At the present stage minority communities remain fragmented.

- Knowing the profiles of communities: community organizers, in the process of organizing, get to know people of different strata, and are usually able to sense the pulse of the communities. This knowledge enables the organizers to "predict" the social trends of communities.
- Skill-training: community organizing involves a variety of skills: planning, resource allocation, inter-personal dynamics, administration, bookkeeping, chairing meetings, publicity, crisis management, etc. In learning these skills, organizers are able to enrich themselves and carry some of these skills to their own jobs or their home-lives.
- Sense of power and hope: community organizing means getting things done by mobilizing people. It also enables people to take initiatives in changing their lives by involvement. It is energizing and gives people a sense of taking control of their lives and provides them hope and power.

The Alphabetic Principles of Community Organizing

It is not easy to do community organizing, there is a lot of hard work involved. However, knowledge of certain principles of organizing communities makes life easier and more manageable. The following are nine key points arranged in alphabetic order (The Alphabetic Principles of Community Organizing):

Accurate analysis of community issues: tune up your listening skill; don't be dogmatic; and be systematic in your analysis.

Build a self-evaluation mechanism in the organizational structure/process: progress is made only when we learn from our mistakes.

Charismatic leadership: leaders have to be persuasive and able to capture media attention.

Democratic decision-making process: autocracy kills community organizing.

Efficient communication networks: mobilization of people has to be fast.

Flexible strategy: the political climate keeps changing and situations vary: avoid dogmatism.

Growing knowledge of the community(ies): do your homework first before undertaking any action.

Humanize the working conditions for community organizers: they are human too, they need emotional support and they need to enjoy their work.

Increase the self-reliance of your organization: it is a good survival strategy: be independent in resources, and prepare for the worst.

How to do Community Organizing

After pointing out the benefits and principles of community organizing, one may still wonder where one should begin. The experience of the now-defunct Riverdale Action Committee Against Racism (RACAR), may illustrate the steps one should take in organizing. Treat what is being said in the following paragraphs as one model. There are other models of organizing which may fit your circumstances better.

RACAR was formed as a community group to kick the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) out of Riverdale, Toronto. It was formed in the Fall of 1980 in response to the establishment of the KKK headquarters on Gerrard Street, and because of the growing influence and activities of the KKK in the area.

Riverdale is a community predominantly of working class whites, mixed with an influx of Greeks, Vietnamese, Chinese, and a few East Indians.

People were talking about the KKK a lot in those days. The coordinator of the Riverdale Inter-cultural Council received a number of letters (along with resolutions) from some community groups condemning the KKK. The Council decided to call a community meeting to deal with the growing concerns, and right from the beginning made sure that whatever actions were taken were community-based.

The first meeting was attended by over 30 persons. Many people brought in their own ideas on how to deal with the KKK. After two hours of brainstorming we decided to form a new community based group. To do that, a Steering Committee, made up of people who lived or worked in Riverdale, was set up. This ground rule was set right at the

Democratic decision making process at work: autocracy kills community organizing.

initiation of RACAR.

In terms of organizational structure, apart from a Steering Committee (which planned and oversaw RACAR – all activities had to be approved by this committee), we set up two Task Forces (Education and Direct Action). These two Task Forces later evolved into four sub-committees (Research, Youth, Petition, and Fund-Raising). Regular meetings were scheduled, and chairpersons of these committees and sub-committees were elected. The chairperson of the Steering Committee was allowed to stay in office for six months. Strategies formulated by the Steering Committee required approval from the general members.

Once the structure of RACAR had been set up, RACAR worked on strategies to kick out the KKK from Riverdale. We had three main strategies:

- public education to raise community consciousness;
- enlargement of RACAR's community base; and
- putting pressure on politicians to do something about the KKK.

In implementing these strategies:

- we prepared brochures (in English, Punjabi, Chinese, Greek, and Spanish), flyers and buttons; organized a cultural event in a public school.
- we leafleted and sold buttons systematically (street by street every weekend and during weekday evenings); called community meetings; liaised with various groups and agencies in Toronto; contacted media; formed coalitions.
- we asked people to sign petitions, invited politicians to some meetings, demonstrated, rallied.

In addition, we worked with the Toronto Board of Education to enrich curricula, researched the KKK, did a lot of fund-raising and public speaking. (For more information on RACAR, read Julian Sher's *White Hoods*, Chapter 10).

The Joy and Pain of Community Organizing

To undertake these activities, many people spent a lot of time going to meeting after meeting, did a lot of leg-work (especially in petitioning), a lot of telephoning and talking with people. We found out from knocking at people's doors, many Riverdale residents approved of what RACAR was doing and showed great contempt for the KKK.

We also found out, by liaising with many race relations groups and ethnic organizations in Toronto's communities, that they gave lip-service to anti-KKK activities, and were afraid to come out from their closets. We also discovered that most of the racial minorities in Riverdale were intimidated by the KKK and were afraid to fight against them. But we got tremendous satisfaction in the great turn-out at our public events (such as the Cultural Day Against the KKK in November, 1980, and the March Rally in May 1981) and in donations we received from community organizations and church groups.

We got the greatest satisfaction in the fact that KKK decided to close their headquarters in Riverdale in late 1981. However, not very soon after, RACAR was, in the word of one organizer, "frozen". It has not done very much since.

Efficient communication is important. We prepared brochures in English, Punjabi, Chinese, Greek and Spanish.

Let us go back to the benefits and priciples of community organizing mentioned above, and see to what extent these principles are correct.

RACAR did a lot of thinking and leg-work in pulling people together to fight for a cause. It accomplished much in grouping community residents who had concern in getting rid of the KKK. But it failed to pull racial minority groups together. It built up sufficient political pressure (through community unity) to kick the KKK out. Many community organizers from RACAR admitted that working in RACAR enabled them to know the Riverdale community better, that they learned a lot in organizing, and in general felt hopeful and powerful while they were doing it. It was a learning experience for many of us.

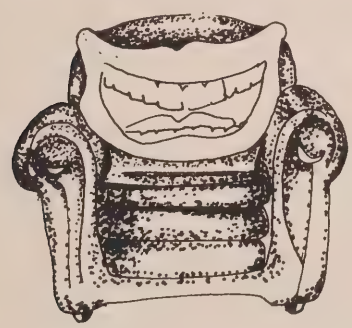
In terms of the Alphabetic Principles of Community Organizing, RACAR successfully followed some, but failed to follow others. For example, RACAR had a good understanding of Riverdale, and learned from the local residents and street people. RACAR was fairly democratic in making decisions, had an excellent communications system by using a "telephone tree" system and regular meetings. RACAR had parties, once in a while, to lift the morale of organizers. Its strategy was flexible enough to incorporate changes resulting from evaluations conducted during meetings.

RACAR was formed to kick the Ku Klux Klan from Riverdale.

Where RACAR failed was in its lack of charismatic leaders (but then RACAR had decided to be low-profile, and not media-catching) and lack of financial resources. The latter is not uncommon for many community organizations.

While RACAR's experience is a success story and many people have benefited from this kind of community organizing, including the residents of Riverdale, there are a few small lessons to be learned from RACAR history:

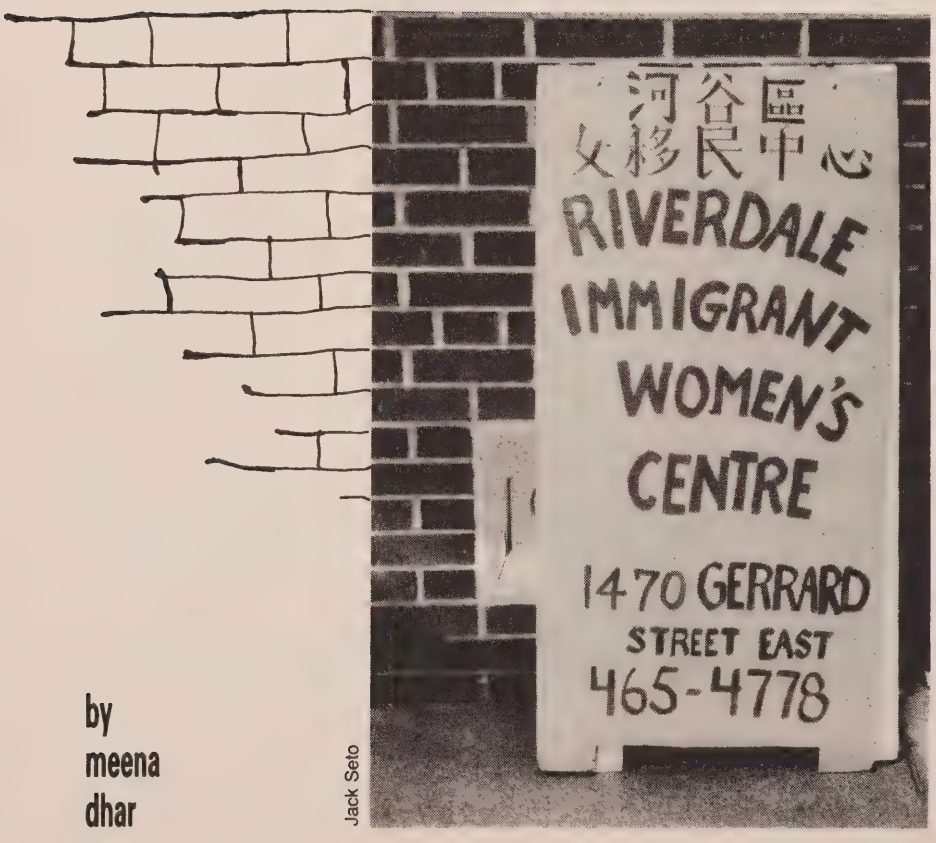
- Beware of armchair theorists: people who just like to talk and tell people what and how to do things, but they themselves do nothing: they are wasting people's time, and what they say is usually not practical. Isolate them.
- Beware of dogmatic leftists: people who try to apply political theories mechanically without considering the community environment and historical content: they try to alienate people. Isolate them.
- Beware of personality conflict in the organization: if possible, try to redirect this conflict into positive energy to accomplish the overall goal of community organizing.
- Beware of burning out: community organizers tend to work too hard and attended too many meetings; they need breaks. Delegate tasks to people.
- Beware of hate messages/literature: try not to internalize them and take measures to protect yourself.
- Beware of cooptation: keep in mind the larger goal of community organizing is to help the community gain power: anything which undermines this large goal is tempting, but should be resisted.
- Beware of set-backs in progress: always formulate contingency plans to deal with them.
- Beware of red-baiting: counteract it with massive public education campaigns.
- Beware of infiltrators who may disrupt community organizing: isolate and expose them to the people.
- Beware of repression: formulate strategies to avoid it.



Beware of armchair theorists who just talk but do nothing themselves.

WOMEN HELPING IMMIGRANT ASIAN WOMEN:

TORONTO'S RIVERDALE IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S CENTRE



Jack Seto

by meena dhar

At one of the Board meetings of the Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre held last October we knew that we had reached a crossroads. In our two year history we had accomplished much but we now needed to take stock of where we were and what was the best direction for us to take in the future.

On the way home from that night, after the meeting, I wondered what the Centre meant to me and why I felt that the time I spent there as a Board member was worthwhile.

Then I recalled a telephone call the Centre had received about a year ago. It was from Pushpa (not her real name), an Indian domestic worker. She wanted to speak to someone in her mother tongue, Hindi. She hadn't spoken to anyone in Hindi for over two months and she was pining away.

Pushpa's Story

I met Pushpa the next day. The words just burst from her in an unending flow. It seemed as if she didn't want to leave anything unsaid for fear she wouldn't have another chance.

Hers was truly a horror story. She had been hired in India by an Indian family while they were on a visit to Delhi. It was agreed that part of her wages would be paid to Pushpa's mother in India; this would help Pushpa pay for her children's education while she was working in Canada.

Once in Toronto her life of unremitting toil began, from six in the morning to 11 at night. During parties she would be serving food till 1 or 2 in the morning. She was left in charge of the baby – so she could be up through the night as well. She was paid part of her salary during the first month. Several months into her job she got a letter from her mother saying that she had not received any money from her employer. When Pushpa raised the subject of payments with her employers, they got very angry and threatened to throw her out.

"Pushpa, an E. Indian domestic, came to Canada to escape poverty. But once in Toronto her life of exploitation truly began."

Through winter her employers gave her no warm clothing. She, therefore, could not leave their house. They frowned on her if she talked to anyone outside the family. She was a virtual prisoner.

But Pushpa had guts. She wasn't going to take all this without a fight. One night when a party was in progress she announced she was not going to serve the guests until her employer had paid her back wages. The employer was furious: he took her to her room and started to beat her up.

When he had left the room, she did a brave thing. She called the police. At ten o'clock, while the party was going strong the police arrived.

Pushpa's employer was audacious when it came to oppressing a helpless, poor woman but timid in front of authority. He accused Pushpa of lying, but gave her $600 which he had in the house as her unpaid wages. He fired her on the spot and told her to leave the house immediately.

What was she to do? She had no friends in the city and it was late at night. There was a neighbour, though, Ann (not her real name) whom Pushpa had served during one of her employer's parties. She seemed different, showed an interest in Pushpa as a person – not just as a serving woman.

At ten o'clock at night Pushpa, accompanied by the police, knocked on Ann's door. Ann took her in immediately. And that is where Pushpa was living when she called our Centre asking for help.

While Ann was one of those rare women who are instinctively and spontaneously helpful, she knew no Hindi and couldn't fully understand what Pushpa wanted to do. And in any case, Ann didn't need domestic help; therefore Pushpa would have to find another job.

Apparently Ann had tracked our Centre down after contacting several centres throughout the city, trying to look for an organization which could help Pushpa. Finally, the Cross Cultural Communication Centre of Toronto referred her to us as an organization which had experience in helping East Indian immigrant women.

Over the next few months, Pushpa came often to the Centre to attend our conversation groups and to be with people with whom she could talk and discuss her problems.

We helped her file a complaint with Ontario's Employment Standards Branch against her former employer for unpaid wages and overtime. A volunteer from the Centre went with her to the office of the Standards Branch as an interpreter and friend. Another volunteer accompanied her to the Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre to help her find a job.

Pushpa's story has a bitter sweet ending. Her former employer, afraid of having assault charges laid against him, immediately paid her $1100 which the Employment Standards Branch assessed as her due. She even got another job. But, unfortunately, she had to return to India because of a serious illness in her family.

A lot of us felt that Pushpa's short visit to Canada, her great trials here, had been offset to some extent by her meeting women who helped her, treated her as a worthy human being and made her life bearable. I, on behalf of the Centre, was proud of the role our Centre played. For me, personally, it made all the long hours spent at the Centre worthwhile.

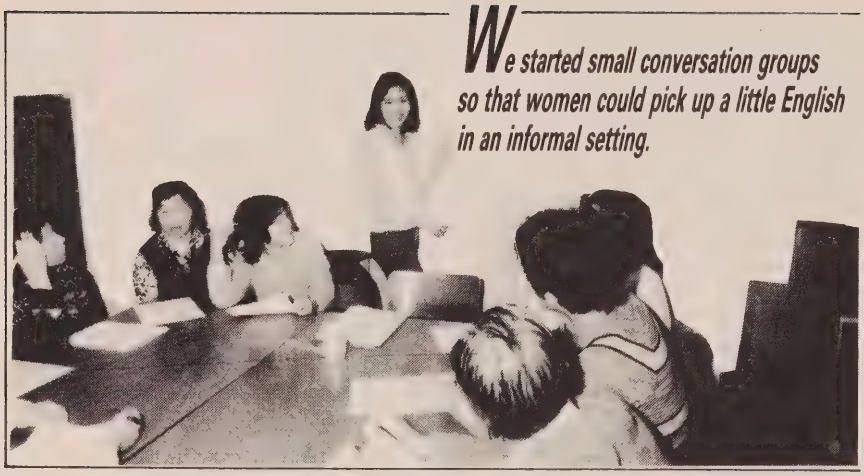
I have gone into Pushpa's story in such detail because it shows the need for our Centre, the role it is playing, its strengths as well as its weaknesses.

Now let me say a few words about our Centre.

The Centre's First Two Years

The Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre operates out of the basement of the Rhodes United Church in an area called Riverdale in East Toronto. Historically Riverdale is a low income community of single family homes. Till the seventies it was overwhelmingly a white working class area. Since then several blocks on one of its main streets, Gerrard Street East, have been taken over by Indian shops – about 40 in number. This shopping strip is now called India Bazaar – the central shopping facility for the 100,000 strong Indian community in the Greater Toronto area (for a historical review of India Bazaar, see Satish Dhar's article on it in *Asianadian* Vol. 4, No. 2, Oct. '82).

In the late seventies the area received an influx of new Vietnamese and Chinese immigrants — many of them boat people. This community has undergone significant social changes in the last decade. In 1982 the Riverdale Intercultural Council (RICC), which has operated in this area since 1974, identified the need for an Immigrant Women's Centre in East End To-



Jack Seto

We started small conversation groups so that women could pick up a little English in an informal setting.

ronto. The Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre was created as an offshoot of RICC. One coordinator and two community workers were hired. Since its founding Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre (RIWC) has operated on its own with its own Board, staff and volunteer workers.

The goal of RIWC right from the start was to be a referral service to maximize the use of the existing services by immigrant women.

I will try to explain what that goal means and how we try to achieve it in practice.

The Women

The majority of women who use our services are Vietnamese and Chinese women living in the area. Many of the East Indian women, such as Pushpa, are referred to us by agencies across Toronto. Some of the agencies know of our Hindi speaking staff and volunteers and activities geared to Asian women. It is an interesting fact, that although Indian Bazaar is located in Riverdale, there are very few Indian families living in the area.

Our Activities

One of the major problems facing immigrant women, particularly newly arrived ones, is how to obtain the services they are entitled to. For instance we found that many women, who did not speak English, did not know how to use the basic facilities needed for day-to-day living. One of the services we offer to newcomers is an escort and interpretation service.

Our volunteers and staff have accompanied newcomers to clinics, hospitals and doctors' offices. We have escorted women to immigration offices, helped them fill forms. We have taken them to taxation offices, police stations, law courts, places they would have normally been afraid to go alone. We have accompanied women for their first trips to department stores, Salvation Army stores and job interviews. We have shown them how to use the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) system. One of our volunteers even had to escort a couple to get their marriage license.

Whenever possible RIWC refers women to other agencies where we know the services they require are available – legal clinics, immigrant job placement centres, community health clinics, manpower training and job placement centres. Often the women are not willing to go to these agencies, since they are intimidated by them. In these cases we work with the women to build their confidence until they are ready to use the services of other agencies.

Many immigrant women lead lives which isolate them from the outside world. Their daily routine consists of work in the factory and in the house. Others spend all their time at home. There is no opportunity for self-development and for sharing their social and emotional needs with other women.

So we started small conversation groups – ranging from four to ten women. The focus of these is on informal English conversation, information sharing, and discussion relating to basic life skills. While these groups are not as structured and as skill oriented as the regular ESL (English as a Second Language) programs they serve a very useful purpose. For some they are an initial step toward enrolling in ESL classes. It gives them the confidence to confront the more formal and institutional context of these classes. For others, who have already completed ESL courses, these informal gatherings are an opportunity to practise conversational English among friends.

Such group sessions have also been held on health issues, self-defense, how to look for a job and job interview skills. Many of these classes were started at the request of the women. RIWC has had as many as ten groups functioning at one time. The groups are run by volunteers and most of the groups meet at the Centre. However, some of the groups sessions are conducted at the women's workplaces as well as in the women's homes.

Out In the Community

The success of these activities and their popularity did not come easily. It was the result of going out into the community. During 1982 and 1983 RIWC undertook an intensive outreach project. In our door-to-door outreach we contacted about 3500 women. We also sent flyers to people's homes and apartments, posted information in community centres, temples, churches and other public places. Our community workers visited neighbourhood schools and school children were given flyers to take to their homes. We put up displays about the Centre at local shopping centres and all East End libraries.

We also conducted a telephone outreach within the East-Indian community and reached some 1800 homes that way. We had to do this because while the Gerrard-

Coxwell area is the focus for Indian shopping, few Indians live there.

Both the door-to-door knocking and telephone outreach enabled person-to-person contact between community workers and the women. This was particularly important because most of the women were not fluent in English. Our community workers' knowledge of their language and the personal approach they used helped the women to open up and seek help.

But the outreach was slow in bearing fruit. The first few months were exceedingly frustrating for the community workers.

Then the women started to come to the Centre. At first, it was to seek advice on specific problems and discuss them with a community worker on a one-to-one basis. The problems ranged from personal, domestic, job related problems, problems of finding day-care and the like.

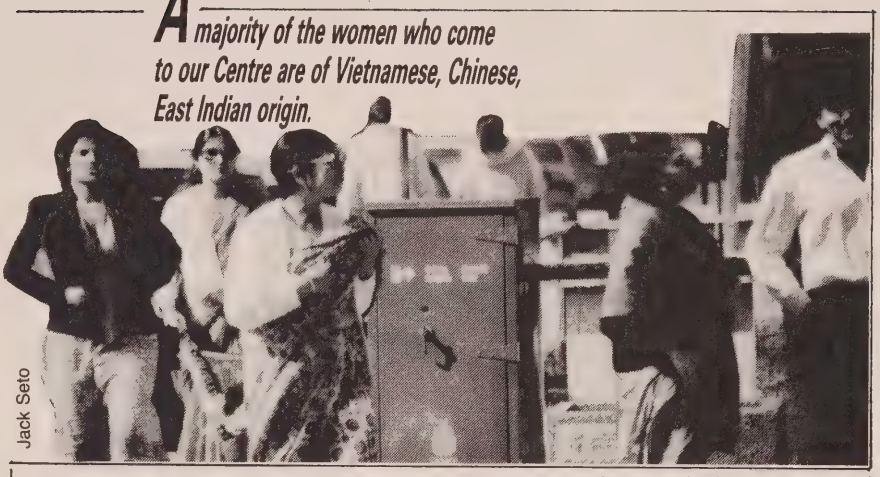
In time they were ready for conversational groups to meet each other and practice conversational English. This slow evolution from person-to-person contact to group sessions signalled the emergence of many women from their homebound shell to social beings. In a sense RIWC and its services evolved with the women and their needs.

We measured the success of our outreach program by the turnout at our potluck dinner – some 100 people turned up and in many cases the men came too.

Differing Needs

One of the goals of RIWC has been to bring women from different communities together. Groups are not dealt with in isolation as far as possible. As I said before, the majority of the women served by RIWC so far are of Chinese, Vietnamese and East Indian origin. In dealing with women of these communities we have learnt that their needs differ.

For instance, there has been a much quicker response to the outreach by the Chinese and Vietnamese women. They show a greater interest in the Centre, use its services and join the informal groups. Although most of them can do without knowledge of English at work, they are keen to learn the language. They seem generally outgoing, and after initial hesitation, make friends and enjoy learning in groups. They are the largest users of RIWC services.


A majority of the women who come to our Centre are of Vietnamese, Chinese, East Indian origin.

Jack Seto

Women of East Indian origin, on the other hand, are quite different. Although extensive outreach was done and many women reached, their response to the Centre has been much slower. The women are less independent and tend to be more homebound. Few of them come to the Centre on their own. They are either referred to us by some agency or come with a member of their family.

East Indian women seem to take much longer to graduate from the level of personal conversation with a trusted community worker to full participation in conversational groups. Few E. Indian women are members of such groups. The kind of support that these women need is of a highly emotional kind. Few of them are ready to go for structured, professional help.

To help East Indian women we have developed a buddy system, pairing one community worker with one woman. In this way the pair work together for several months. The problems these women bring to our Centre range from mental stress and extreme isolation to child and wife abuse as well as financial problems (particularly separated and divorced mothers).

Once an E. Indian woman has used our centre, she spreads the word about us among her friends. This encourages more women to come. This illustrates another interesting fact we learnt about East Indian women: word of mouth testimony from women they know is the only type of promotion they trust.

RIWC's Role

It is apparent that the services RIWC offers are much needed. We see our role as gently introducing newly arrived or isolated immigrant women to Canadian society. Our informal one-to-one method of working with women, responding to their needs at their level of development is our strength. We prepare women for a more independent role, give them the skills and confidence necessary to deal with bureaucratic and formally oriented service agencies. We also help them acquire the life maintenance skills necessary to participate more fully in this society.

One of our problems is that we are not as well known in the immigrant community as we would like to be. When other community agencies in the East End of Toronto encounter an Asian woman with a problem which requires personal, trusting contact, they often do not know where to send this woman. Not enough of them have heard of us. The problem is particularly acute where it comes to East Indian women. We haven't yet acquired

sufficient visibility among the service agencies and community centres for them to send their clients to us.

The Future

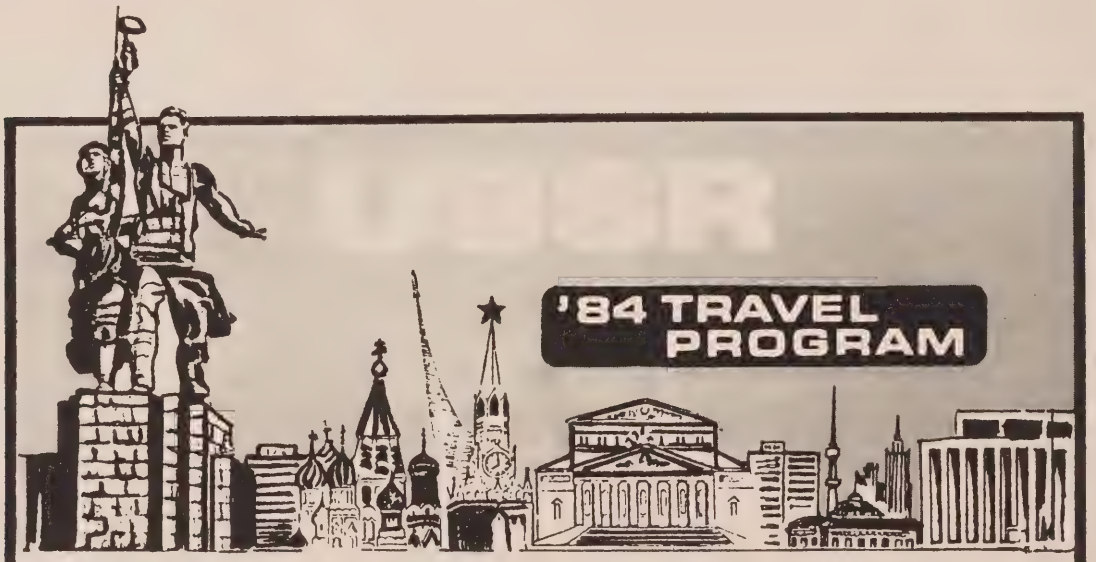
One of the problems we are tackling now is to gain visibility among community groups and agencies serving immigrant women. Recently we held a seminar for representatives of other community agencies and individual community workers. Some 50 people attended the seminar. They assured us of their help – such as coordinating some services, cooperating with our staff and referring appropriate clients to us.

Our other initiative is to get more active participation from women involved in other community agencies and immigrant women groups, as board members or volunteers. This will allow our network of contacts to grow. And in this way we hope to be able to help more needy immigrant women in the future.

So the future looks good for our centre. Recently we undertook a self-evaluation (on which this article is based). In fact, our self-evaluation report and the seminar we held for other agencies, has boosted our spirits a great deal. I would highly recommend that all community agencies undertake positive self assessments such as the type we have just completed.

If you want to know more about Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre please write to:

Riverdale Immigrant Womens Centre
1470 Gerrard St. East
Toronto, Ontario



Ukraine Welcomes You
Kiev 2, Lviv 4, Ternopil 4, Chernivtsi 4, Odessa 4, Kiev 3, Paris 1.
Departures: May 4, 18, June 1, 15, 29, July 13, 27, August 10, 24, Sept. 7, 21.
Total days – 22 **$995.00** per person

Hello Ukraine
Kiev 2, Lviv 5, Ternopil 5, Kiev 2, Paris 1
Departures: May 11, 25, June 8, 22, July 6, 20, August 3, 17, 31, Sept. 7, 14.
Total days – 15 **$795.00** per person

Ukraine Plus Sochi - on the Black Sea
Kiev 2, Ternopil 3, Lviv 3, Sochi 3, Kiev 3, Paris 1.
Departure: May 18 only.
Total days – 15 **$795.00** per person

Gems & Jewels - Group A
Moscow 4, Kiev 3, Yalta 3, Leningrad 5, Helsinki 1.
Departures: May 11, 25, June 8, 22, July 6, 20, August 10, 24, Sept. 7, 21, October 12, 19.
Total days – 16 from **$695.00**

Central Asia and Caucasus
Moscow 2, Samarkand 2, Tashkent 2, Dushanbe 2, Baku 2, Tbilsi 3, Sochi 2, Leningrad 2, Helsinki 1.
Departures: May 14, June 4, 18, July 2, 16, August 6, 20, Sept. 10, 17.
Total days – 18 **$930.00** per person

Ukraine and Caucasus
Moscow 1, Kiev 4, Lviv 4, Sochi 4, Tbilisi 3, Moscow 3, Helsinki 1
Departures: June 18, July 23, August 13, Sept. 3.
Total days – 20 **$950.00** per person

Gems & Jewels - Group A
Moscow 2, Leningrad 4, Kiev 2, Yalta 4, Moscow 1.
Departures: April 5, 19, 26, May 3, 10, June 14, 21, July 5, 19, August 2, 9, 23, Sept. 13, 27, October 4.
Total days – 13 from **$595.00** per person

Star Cities
Leningrad 4, Volgograd 3, Sochi 4, Kiev 4, Moscow 4, Helsinki 1.
Departures: May 9, 16, June 13, July 4, 18, 25, Sept. 5, 26.
Total days – 20 **$995.00** per person

Transsiberian (Round the World Tour)
Group A: by air to Japan, by sea to Far Eastern. Soviet port of Nakhodka, by Legendary Transsiberian Train through the heart of Siberia, by air to Central Asia and the Black Sea, by train to Helsinki, by air home.
Tokyo 3, Khabarovsk 1, Irkutsk 2, Lake Baikal, Alma Ata 2, Samarkand 1, Dushanbe 2, Baku 2, Yalta 4, Moscow 3, Leningrad 4, Helsinki, Finland 1.
Departures: May 25, June 24.
Group B: Similar itinerary as Group A in reverse – commencing in Leningrad, returning home from Tokyo.
Departures: July 20, August 20.
Total days – 32 from **$2,900.00**

HARMONY TRAVEL LIMITED
1013 BLOOR STREET WEST
TORONTO, ONTARIO
CANADA M6H 1M1
PHONE: 537-2165

canadian ethnic studies
études ethniques au canada

An interdisciplinary journal devoted to the study of ethnicity, immigration, inter-group relations and the history and cultural life of ethnic groups in Canada.

Une revue interdisciplinaire consacree à l'étude de l'éthnicité, de l'immigration, des relations entre groupes, et de l'historie et de la vie culturelle collective au Canada.

SPECIAL ISSUES AVAILABLE/NUMEROS SPECIAUX EN VENTE

1978, Vol. X, no. 2 — Ethnic Radicals
1981, Vol. XIII, no. 1 - Ethnicity and Femininity
1982, Vol. XIV, no. 1 - Ethnic Literature
1983, Vol. XV, no. 3 - Ethnicity and Aging

***RECENT REGULAR ISSUES/NUMEROS REGULIERS RECENTS**

include/comprennent

1982, Vol. XIV, no. 1 — "The Prairie Writers and the Métis: Rudy Wiebe and Margaret Lawrence" by George Woodcock
Vol. XIV, no. 3 — "Ethnic Relations in Wartime: Nationalism and European Minorities in Alberta during the Second World War" by Howard Palmer

1983, Vol. XV, no. 1 — "Resettlement of Vietnamese-Chinese Refugees in Montreal, Canada: Some Socio-psychological Problems and Dilemmas" by Kwok Chan and Lawrence Lam
"Stephen G. Stephansson: Icelandic-Canadian Poet and Freethinker" by Jane McCracken

1983, Vol. XV, no. 2 — "Politique d'immigration et immigration en provenance de la Caraïbe anglophone au Canada et au Québec, 1900 - 1979" by Micheline Labelle, Serge Larose, Victor Piché

$7.00 for individual issue/$7.00 pour un seul numero

*For issues available prior to 1980 enquire at the Calgary journal address below/pour les numeros avant 1980 disponibles adressez vos demandes au bureau du journal à Calgary, à l'adresse ci-dessous.

SPECIAL ISSUES FORTHCOMING/NUMEROS SPECIAL A PARAITRE

1984 ETHNIC ART AND ARCHITECUTRE
1985 THE MÉTIS

Issues also include book and film reviews, opinion, immigrant memoirs, translation of primary sources, reports on national conferences, and bibliography.

Chaque numéro comprend des recensions de livres et de films, des opinions, des mémoires d'immigrants, des traductions de sources primaires des rapports sur les conférénces nationales, et des bibliographies.

Subscription rates/Frais d'Abonnement:	One year/Un au
( ) Individuals/Particuliers	$27.00
( ) Students/Edudiants	$12.00
( ) Institutions	$32.00

Above rates include a quarterly newsletter and membership in the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association/Les frais comprennent les bulletins trimestriels et la qualité de membre de la Societé canadienne d'études ethniques.

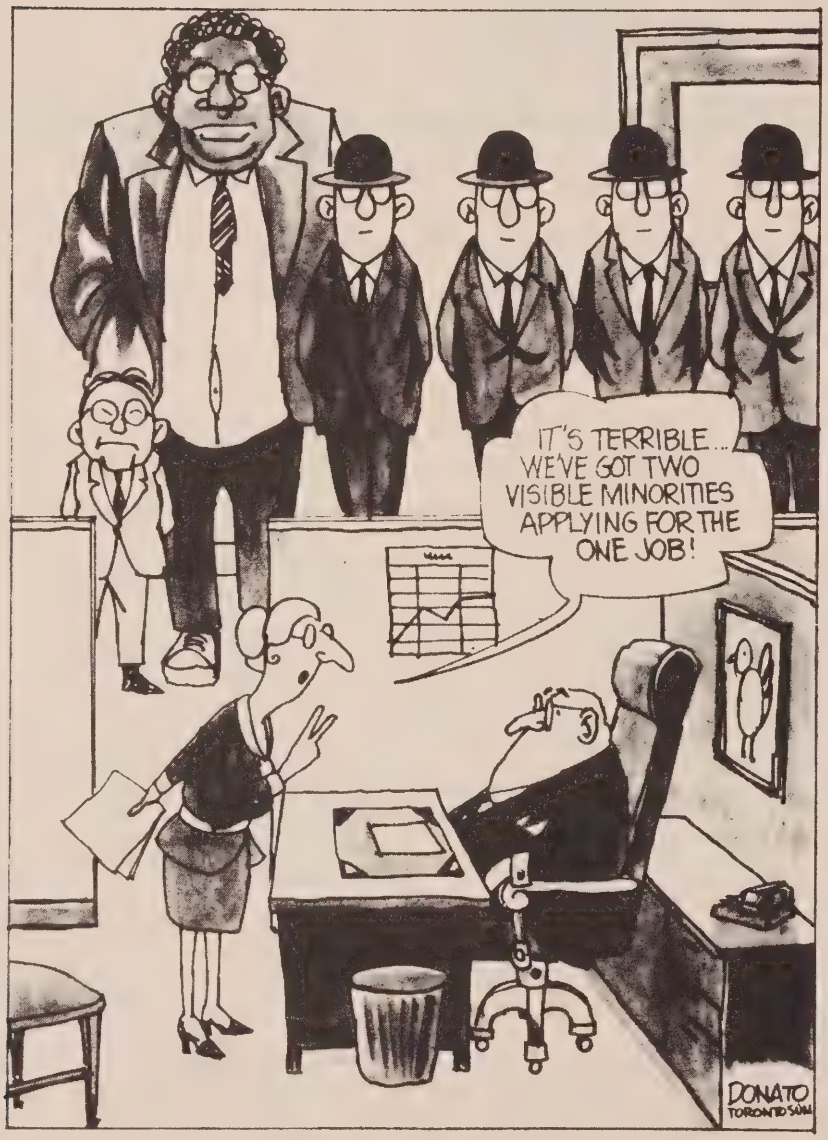
Articles for publication, books for review and general correspondence should be addressed to CANADIAN ETHNIC STUDIES, c/o The University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4. Single orders and back issues can be obtained from this address also.

Subscription orders and inquiries should be addressed to CANADIAN ETHNIC STUDIES ASSOCIATION, 43 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C3.

Tous les articles, les recensions, et la correspondance générale doivént être adressés aux ETUDES ETHNIQUES AU CANADA, Université de Calgary, 2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4. Tout numéro courant et encien de la revue peut être commandé a l'adresse ci-dessus.

Pour les abonnements et les informations prière de vous addresser aux ETUDES ETHNIQUES AU CANADA ASSOCIATION, 43 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C3.

DUBIOUS AWARD



"Welcome to Canada's brave new world of commissars, coercion and compliance."

"And what a field day for the parasites and predators of the human rights industry who prey on our social fabric."

These measured and thoughtful words are from the Toronto Sun's March 30, 1984 editorial. The Sun was commenting on the report of the Committee on Visible Minorities entitled *Equality Now!*

The cartoon shown here accompanied this edifying editorial. In our opinion it stoops sufficiently low to serve as a fitting accompaniment.

The black man – a huge, incompletely evolved ape like specimen (how did he get through the door?) – has the look of a dullard. Next to him is a cunning looking midget with mongoloid features.

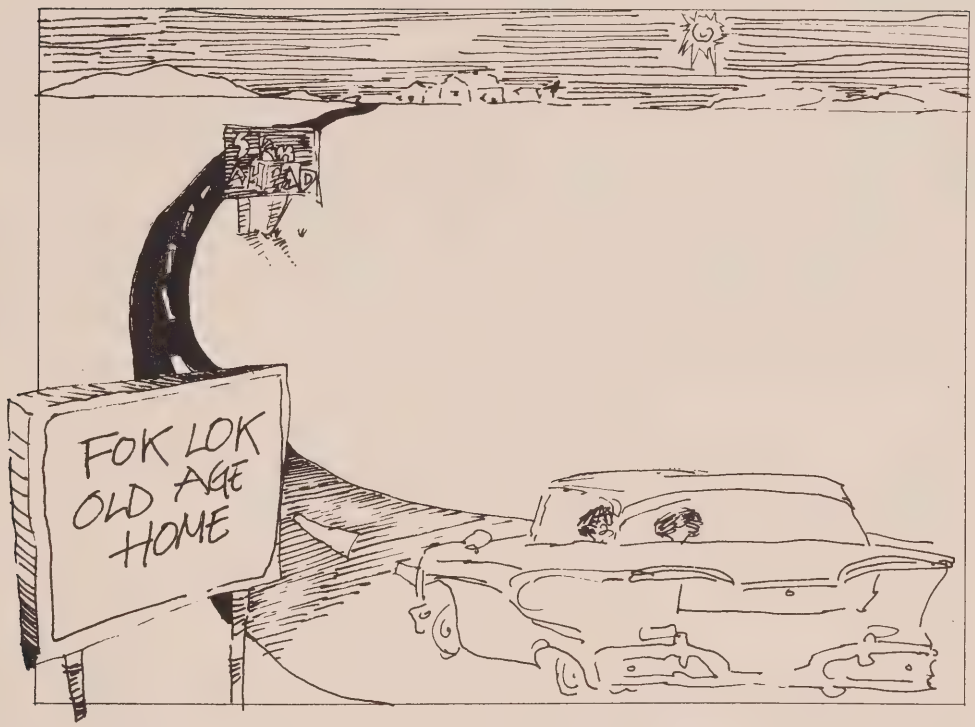
And then in contrast to these two are four well-proportioned business-like white men: not too short, not too tall – the right stuff. So perfect in fact that they all look alike. The style of their hats remind one of the mounties. In other words, the four whites are proper Canadians – unlike the others.

Hats off to you Toronto Sun! You have won the Dubious Award fairly and squarely. By using simple-minded, degrading stereotypes you have succeeded in feeding the irrational fears and prejudices of the majority against racial minorities.

VISITING

A SHORT STORY

by gary engkent



At times I wonder why Mother goes to see Great Auntie Liu.

There are times when I wonder why Mother insists that we visit Great Auntie Liu. Every so often, when I am home, she would bundle some newly-purchased fruit, cookies and homemade Chinese pastry and have me drive her across town to the old age home where our ninety-year-old relative lives. Today is one of those days.

"I don't see why you do this all the time," I grumble in halting Chinese. "You hate the old woman so."

"It is *lai*," she replies. "It is expected of us. Outside of her immediate family, we are her closest kin. We come from the same village. Anyway, if we don't see her once in a while, others in the community will surely talk and say we're neglecting her, the old sow."

"Sounds damn hypocritical to me. Who cares what others'll say? It's none of their business. And they'll talk anyway."

A scowl appears on her brown, seventy-five-year-old brow. She gives me a displeased look that says I have forgotten my Chinese self. She disapproves of my acquired *fan gwei* ways and laments the loss of my Chinese upbringing, now somewhat diluted after thirty-some years in Canada.

"Look, her own son, Peter, hardly visits," I add. "And what about Peter's kids, eh? They avoid the old age home altogether. You told me that!"

"Not the point. At all!" she chides. "*Hon yren lai. Lai!*"

"Sure. I understand. We owe. Chinese *lai*, obligation, duty, responsibility, custom. We owe – forever."

"Yes."

So we owe Great Auntie Liu something which she had done for us long ago. So we owe her son, Peter, as well for what he has done for us more recently. In short, Mother and I owe a lot to a lot of people in the Chinese community. Debts to be paid back in kind, debts to be paid back in kindness, debts accumulated over the years, debts half-forgotten, half-remembered with reluctance, debts that no money could buy out, debts that beggar us. One way or another, Mother is particularly keen at paying such debts. So we go visit Great Auntie Liu.

"She won't die, you know. Not for a long time."

"The Liu women in our village are known to have long lives," she says.

Mother's face, wrinkled, gaunt and sallow, reveals little of the hard bitterness I know she bears for Great Auntie. Occasionally, a faint tightening of her lips betrays her feelings. She seals the plastic shopping bag and goes to the car. I struggle into my jacket and lock the house door.

I help her into the car, and before we get out of the driveway, she starts talking in a matter-of-fact voice all the way to the old age home. She tells the same old stories I have heard countless times before.

I should be immune after hearing them for so many years, but her very words still rent my heart, tearing a sinew here and twisting a frayed nerve there until I want to scream: "Shut up! Shut up, Mother! I don't want to hear those stories again. No more!" I want her to stop the hurting – the pain of her bitter memories – the suffering she had endured for my sake when I was a child at the home of Great Auntie Liu.

I don't think Mother knows what she is doing to my soul. She talks insistently. In my mind, I want to travel back to that time and right those hurts, avenge those slights and wrongs, destroy the gall at its infancy so that they would not fester our lives now an ocean apart and thirty years later. Oh, the pain. Her hurts, my hurts. Her sufferings, my sufferings. They crush me. I want to scream, but I say nothing. I don't think I can stop her from spewing out the past, spewing out the bitterness in the heart. As a dutiful son, unmarried, I am here to listen, and she has much to say.

"She was never kind to us. To you. To me."

"I don't remember."

"You should remember. Everything!"

"I was only four at the time, Mother!"

"Old enough to remember. Old enough not to forget."

At four years old, I was old enough to retain fragments and disembodied memories. I cannot vouch for the accuracy – for that matter, the veracity – of such remembrances now. I may have changed a few things, modified a few incidents, filled in some with apocrypha to make the memory of Hong Kong a bit nostalgic. But since we came to Canada thirty-some years ago, Mother repeated those events to me so often from her point of view that I cannot distinguish between her thoughts and my memories.

Above, the room was lit by a five-watt ceiling bulb, and the light served three bedrooms.

Hong Kong then was a hostile place, packed with too many desperate people fleeing the communist horde. Mother and I were two refugees among the hundred thousands that poured in illegally. Still, we were more fortunate than the others. My father was in Canada – *gum san*, the golden mountain – and had arranged a place for us to stay with the Lius in Hong Kong. The Lius, our clan and village relatives back in China, lived in a third-storey flat which they had bought after the Second World War with the money my Great Uncle earned in Canada.

Great Auntie rented out every inch of her dingy flat to anyone who was willing to pay. She had a collection of blood and village cousins and a motley group of transients. Like us, some relatives were semi-permanent boarders who were staying until they got their Hong Kong residency or their emigration papers to *gum san*. A few boarders were plainly hiding out – from what I was too young to know or be told. Under such conditions, although we had a roof over our heads, Mother and I did not know from one day to the next what was going to happen to us. What if Father failed to bring us to Canada? Still, we were more fortunate than the miserable beggars who slept on filthy streets and than other refugees who could not even sell themselves for a bowl of rice.

Mother and I lived in a closet-sized, makeshift bedroom. Once it had been part of a decent sized hallway between the parlor and the bedrooms; now it was divided by paper-thin boards and flimsy curtains into three extra bedrooms. Ours was large enough for a makeshift cot and a small, rickety night table. All our possessions – enough to fill a battered suitcase – were tucked under the frame of the cot. A very worn-out, polka-dot sheet serving as a door assured us of privacy. Above, the room was lit by a five-watt ceiling bulb, and that light served all three bedrooms and the narrow hallway. Great Auntie never failed to turn it off each evening at ten sharp.

"If it weren't for my husband's generosity and sweet nature, you'd be out on the streets," Great Auntie would often say to Mother and repeat it to me.

"Yes, we are indeed fortunate," Mother would say in front of all the boarders and Great Auntie. "And we have you and your husband to thank." But once in our little room, she would whisper to me, "Be a good boy. Don't make a fuss. Your father is arranging for us to go to *gum san*. Soon. You will see."

"Why does she look down on us?" I would ask. "Why does everyone call us beggars behind our back?"

"We are not beggars! Your father sends her money for food and lodging all the time."

As I look back, what Mother said wasn't quite true. My father offered to pay Great Uncle Liu, but according to Chinese custom our relative refused – had to refuse – the money. Knowing full well how that would make us look in the eyes of the Liu clan in Hong Kong, Father sent gifts of money to Great Auntie. Of this I learned much later. Great Auntie, of course, never mentioned the money.

One of Great Auntie's teenaged grand children muttered, "Why can't she just die and leave us be?"

I don't remember a time when Great Auntie was kind to us – although I'm sure there must have been one occasion at least. Day in and day out, Mother endured the brunt of Great Auntie's scorn and abuse. When I had a bout with diarrhea, Mother did several washings a day because I had very few clothes. For that week, Great Auntie complained loudly about our outrageous use of water, how much that was going to cost her, how we inconvenienced her boarders and herself, and how I was allowed to be so undisciplined. One time she stopped me from going to the toilet. I cried and lost control. I don't remember the pain, but I remember the flash of a hand striking my face and her stern, scowling look. I remember feeling badly.

Mother, of course, apologized to her in front of all the boarders.

The only time I remember Mother losing her temper with Great Auntie was the day following Chiang Kai-Shek's boast that he was about to invade communist-held China and restore the Republic. Everyone in Hong Kong, especially the refugees, found reason to celebrate. As part of my contribution to the festivity, I took two *yuans* I had saved up and sneaked out of the flat with a distant cousin. I wanted to buy some savoury pork for the supper table. That whole morning and afternoon, the cousin and I wandered through the market. I didn't think that we were lost – although some worried boarders later told us, after a spanking and communal scolding, that we were.

Mother was pale with worry, and I was proud of my achievement in buying a few ounces of tasty pork. At the door, Great Auntie took the package from me, discovered what it was, and distributed it to her boarders. Mother and I never tasted a morsel. Because of the emotional strain, Mother forgot herself and muttered something – I don't remember what – but Great Auntie overheard it, and there was a great row. It lasted for weeks on end. Great Auntie threatened to throw us out a number of times.

But the bitter argument and recriminations did not remain only in the Liu flat in Hong Kong. Mother wrote to my father about the incident and Great Auntie wrote her version to her husband. I believe there were harsh words exchanged in *gum san* as well, although Father's letters admonished Mother. My father never really understood the constant tension and unhealthy atmosphere at Great Auntie's. In later years when he would hear those stories again, he would shake his head and say that when too many women live under one roof, bickering is unavoidable.

So, after one and a half years with Great Auntie, we finally received our immigration papers and left on the BOAC for *gum san*. Mother later told me that Father had instructed her to give Great Auntie a large sum of *lai-shi* as a token of our appreciation and gratitude. Great Auntie muttered that we were more trouble than we were worth. Strangely, though, I still have the only photograph of Great Auntie and me at the airport in Hong Kong.

For the next twelve years I did not see Great Auntie until Canadian immigration permitted relatives to join their Chinese-Canadian citizens. Great Auntie was seventy-years old, and within a year in *gum san*, survived her husband whom she had not seen in twenty-five years.

And now she lies in an old age home.

"All these things happened a long, long time ago," I tell Mother as I park in the lot. "What's the sense of bringing up old hurts every time we go see her?"

She does not answer me, but her old eyes say that I have somehow betrayed her. But I am determined not to carry such ancient grudges into my generation, and further.

"Anyway, look at the good side. Peter is not like that."

When my father went into the restaurant business for himself, Peter Liu, Great Auntie's son, was there to help out. The times when I was away at university and when my father took ill, Peter would run the small cafe. Although Father paid him, Peter didn't ask for money. And when my father died two years ago, Peter helped us arrange the funeral. Now, my job takes me away from this town, and my mother will not

hear of living anywhere else but where her husband is buried. Peter still visits or phones her and asks if she needs any help. If debts are accumulative, then Mother and I owe a lot to Peter Liu.

"We must visit his mother," my mother says.

I felt sorry for the old woman the time when at an unguarded moment one of Great Auntie's teenaged grandchildren muttered, "Why can't she just die and leave us be?" Later I heard from the Chinese community's rumour mill that her middle-aged daughter-in-law had spat

Taking the shopping bag and placing it on top of the night table, I tell Great Auntie: "It's here when you get hungry."

"You are such a good boy. I was just telling my husband – he's just gone out for a walk – I was just telling him what a perfect child you

Perhaps I have become a *fan gwei*, a white devil.

Lying there unmoving, Great Auntie Liu looks lifeless. Only minute motions show her tenacious hold onto the last strands of life. She can go, I think, any time. Yet I remember how corpulent she had once been, and now age has made her into a bundle of old bones wrapped in sickly, tallow and flabby skin. A wheelchair is beside the bed. A large poster tacked on the wall gives the nurses the Chinese words for some basic necessities. She can hardly walk now, as the legacy of her once-bound feet adds to her present difficulties. She sleeps most of the day, I suppose, to ease the long hours away. Great Auntie is left there to lie out her days.

Four years ago, Great Auntie broke her hip and elbow when she slipped on the linoleum floor in the kitchen. After her bones mended, she remained in the hospital for another six months; old age set in other complications. When she was finally well enough to be discharged, Peter's wife and children had gotten used to not having her at home and were loath to see her back. Peter was caught in the dilemma of either pleasing his family or fulfilling the duties of a Chinese son to his widowed mother. For a while Great Auntie was shunted from one nursing home to another, until Peter got her in this respectable old age home in town.

those very words in Great Auntie's face. She was a burden; she wasn't wanted in *gum san.* What do you do with a useless old woman? But Great Auntie survived her daughter-in-law.

"Auntie," Mother calls, "Wake up. You have visitors."

The old woman does not respond immediately. Mother calls again, and this time Great Auntie stirs. Her eyes open, but she does not recognize us. Mother tells her who we are.

"Oh, you're all here to see me. How nice," Great Auntie says with a wide, vacant smile. Mother takes Great Auntie's hands. I hold onto the plastic shopping bag.

"*Hai*, yes," Mother says. "We've come to see how you are. Have you eaten? How do you feel?"

"Of course, very well. I always make dinner for Pei-Tin." Pei-Tin is Peter's proper Chinese name.

"We brought you something," Mother takes the oranges out and unwraps some Chinese pastry for Great Auntie. "I made them specially for you yesterday. You know, Auntie, they never feed anyone well in these places"

"You are very kind, but Pei-Tin and his wife have already brought me fruit and cookies." Great Auntie points her finger to the empty, night table. "They have just left. Pei-Tin is a very busy man; still, he visits me every day."

were in Hong Kong. I felt so sad when I took you and your mother to the airport. Do you remember?"

"Yes," I tell her. "It was a very long, long time ago."

"Do you remember – I remember, yes, the night they brought you, cold and shivering and hungry, to my home, I fed you – how you ate! I later told your mother that you could eat everything in the house and still be hungry. What an appetite. And now you bring me cookies. So nice, nice."

Great Auntie laughs abruptly. Her eyes stare past our faces. When she breaks off her revelry, her whole face becomes pale and confused. She works her jaw, and spittle rolls down a corner of her mouth. Her eyes dart about. Finally, she recognizes us again.

"Your father," Great Auntie says sternly, "still has not paid me or our family for those years in Hong Kong. And you and your mother stayed so long. Not even a thank you. How could you be so cruel to an old woman who treated you kindly?"

Mother is livid. She trembles with anger and, for a moment, I fear she will lash out some terrible curse at Great Auntie.

"You mustn't say that, Auntie. We paid. In full. We didn't cheat you."

"Did you now? I don't remember. It is all so confusing," Great Auntie says. "You must forgive an old

woman. There's nothing much to do here but sleep and think. But I am sure –"

"We must leave now," Mother's voice is shrill. "We just came by to see how you were getting along. Tell your son that we came by. Be sure to tell Pei-Tin. Good-bye."

"Must you leave so soon? Next time you come, I will have you stay for supper. You will come back?"

I look at Mother. How many times have I come home in the past years? How many times have we trekked here to replay the scene?

"Yes, sure."

I do not look forward to taking mother home. I know she will want to talk more about Great Auntie, and, frankly, I have had enough for one day. I wonder what pleasure Mother gets out of this visit. I wonder what she got out of the previous visits. Perhaps, I have become a *fan gwei*, a white devil. I am missing some of the oriental subtleties that I ought to possess. I have lost the art of knowing what debts are paid, what debts are owed, what can never be balanced.

I feel sorry for Great Auntie, even though she had been unkind to us in the past. An invalid, she is abandoned by her family and is left to the care of strangers. Who visits her more frequently than blood-relations? My Mother.

As we approach the car, Mother stumbles. I quickly catch her by the arm. She recovers her balance and pushes my hand away.

"You should be more careful," I admonish. I dread the thought of her breaking some bone

"I am all right!"

"Sure," I help her into the car anyway.

We get home about two-thirty. We have spent about an hour and a half visiting, although a good portion of the time is spent travelling to and from the old age home. At most, I'd say we were with Great Auntie for no more than twenty-five minutes.

Mother makes tea for herself and instant coffee for me in the kitchen. We sit in silence for a while. Although she says nothing, I can sense the gorge of bitterness about her. Her eyes concentrate on the tea, but she is miles and years gone.

I should have been immune, but her very words still rent my heart... I wanted to scream.

I look at my widowed Mother, old, frail, and shrunken in body. More often now her lips are clamped in a tight stoic manner. Rarely does she smile, and when she does, it is tinged with bitterness, with irony. Here in this house which she steadfastly refuses to have repaired and which takes on the cloying smells of dour oldness, she lives alone. She wants nothing new, and after a while I gave up introducing anything new to the house. After my father was buried, she told me she would live here as long as she could. Nothing of my father's is removed. The times when I return to settle her household bills, I still feel my father's presence in the things he left behind. Surely Mother feels them more keenly.

"When will you be leaving?" she asks quietly.

"In a day or two. I have much to do."

"Yes, of course."

"You'll be all right," I assure her. I explain to her what I have done with the household finances. Telephone bill paid, electricity, water and so on. I repeat everything and she nods approvingly.

"You should get married," she says abruptly.

"Sure," I say. "And have grandchildren for you."

"Grandchildren would be nice."

"Sure. Like Peter's kids."

"You will raise them differently."

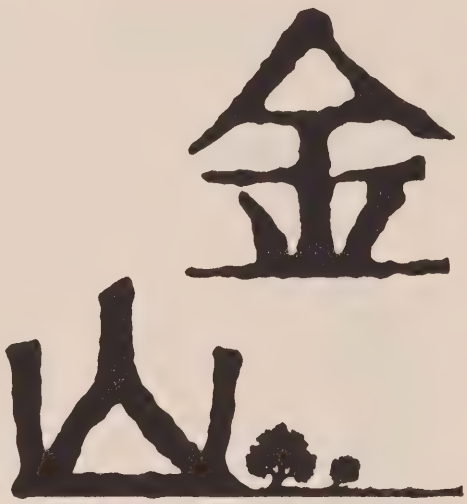
Sure.

I wonder.

Mother takes the empty cups to the sink and begins washing them. She starts talking about other things that she has seen and done, always, in the old country. She is seventy-five, and I am the dutiful, unmarried son, half her age. I come to visit my aging mother whenever I can or must.

At times I wonder why. Mother really goes to see Great Auntie Liu.

LETTERS



Anthony Chan's vituperative reply to my "review" (see *Asianadian*, Summer/Fall, 1983) – and I use quotation marks for good reason – of **Gold Mountain** (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1983) begs a rejoinder. My article, which appeared in the April, 1983 issue of this magazine, was never meant to be a review of Chan's book. Rather, it was supposed to be a critique of the so-called "Sojourner Myth."

Yet, be that as it may, even if taken as a book review, I feel I have done Anthony Chan no injustice. My earlier criticisms still stand. I take sharp issue with Anthony Chan's scholarship, or rather, the lack of it, his propensity to read history backwards, of imposing present realities upon the past, and his readiness to rely on stock explanations.

I find fault with the "Sojourner Myth" not because it takes a "quantum leap" from the established interpretation, as Chan would have it, but because the departure is made as an article of faith without the weight of evidence, a criticism which Chan seems wholly incapable of understanding. Surely, one cannot accept the testimony of the Chinese representatives, who appeared before the 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese immigration, as definitive proof of the emigrants' intention to stay.

We must keep in mind that people have a habit of distorting the truth when their own interests are at stake. It is simply deplorable that a professionally-trained historian like Anthony Chan has neither a sense of historical perspective nor a firm grasp of his subject.

Gold Mountain is an anachronism, a relic of the antiquarian genre of filipietistic ethnic history. For the informed reader, Chan turns up little new information, much less insight. His neglect to do the necessary spadework of consulting the Chinese press, and recording the memories of earlier generations of Chinese Canadians still living, other than his own family, prevents the common people from telling their own stories. Consequently, Chan ends up speaking for them, and the fluff he offers as "an insider's view" of Canadian history is nothing more than an outpouring of moral outrage.

Despite Chan's disclaimer that his book is not primarily concerned with racial injustice, I dare say, **Gold Mountain** is more about Sinophobia than about Chinese Canadians. Contrary to what our erudite friend seems to think, placing an ethnic minority at the centre of a study is not the same as studying them on their *own* terms; for to do that we must attempt to discover how the ethnic minority perceived their world, their attitudes and ambitions, and how these became expressed in the social relationships, clan and fraternal associations, religious institutions and ethnic neighbourhoods they formed. Only by asking the proper questions the social historian makes the banality of daily life more comprehensible.

Unfortunately, Anthony Chan is too preoccupied with vindicating the strikebreaker, the inveterate gambler, the chronic opium addict, the licentious prostitute, and goodness knows who else was accused of indulging in what other forms of moral depravity. More concerned with popular images than the substance of immigrant life, Chan slips into generalities when he discusses how the Chinese dealt with each other in the course of everyday interaction. He is quite content to tell us that their behavior was conditioned by the virulent discrimination they encountered.

It is in this context, then, that the "Sojourner Myth" takes on an importance of inflated proportion. Writing with a sense of grievance, Chan feels the need to justify the Chinese fact in Canada. Rather than let the record speak for itself, he embellishes their contribution, and romanticizes their struggle in helping to build a country. The larger-than-life railroad worker has become the epitome of that experience in Chinese Canadian mythology.

In equating the "Sojourner" with the "Foreigner," Chan confuses two separate issues. He mistakes a political question for a historical one. Instead of dealing with the former for what it is – namely, a racist conception of race and nationality – Chan allows himself to be distracted by the calumny. Turning his presentist concerns into a historical problem, he summarily dismisses the existence of the migrant. Chan is simply dishonest in denying that the "Sojourner Myth" forms the underlying premise of **Gold Mountain** (see *Asianadian*, Summer/Fall, 1983, p. 28), since we are told:

> *A 1967 order in council amending the 1952 Immigration Act created an influx of Chinese* settlers *not only from China but also such places as Taiwan, Malaysia, Trinidad, Jamaica, India, South Africa, the Philippines and Peru.* They brought with them the same hopes and desires as their compatriots had in the nineteenth century. (**Gold Mountain**, p. 149, emphasis mine.)

Chan shows little appreciation for historical change, and even less for human agency. The post-Second World War immigrants, particularly those who arrived after 1967, came from a social background vastly different than their pre-war counterparts. Overwhelmingly urban, educated and comparatively affluent, immigration had a decidedly different meaning for them. Among other things, immigration had legal implications. The very act of applying for landed immigrant status was a conscious decision to change one's nationality, renouncing or relinquishing the citizenship of one country in favour of another.

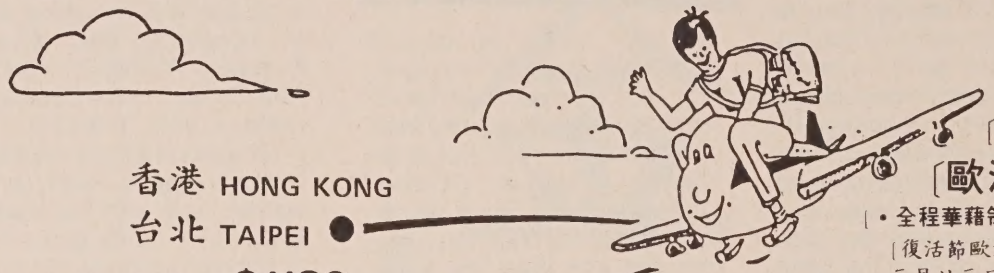
The nineteenth century *hua qiao* or Overseas Chinese never thought in those terms. He had his own set of priorities. Even though he might spend a good part of his life outside China, and indeed settle in his adopted country, he maintained a strong sense of separateness. In part, that feeling came from the purpose of his emigration, which was to earn money to support the *jia* (家) domestic economy (the word *qiao*, it should be pointed out, implies temporariness, meaning a journey or temporary stay; (see Wang Gungwu, "A Note On the Origins of Hua-Ch'iao," in his **Community and Nation** (1981), 118-127).

Emigration initially meant relocating overseas for work, only afterwards, likely with the death of the head of the family and the division of common property, did the migrant come to see himself as a settler. As the term *hua qiao* evolved, it lost its impermanent connotation and came to mean someone who lived outside China. Yet, even then, the *hua qiao* continued to retain his separate identity, subjectively, of course, but also with official recognition. Certainly, by 1911 and not until 1949, a person of Chinese-descent was a Chinese subject by law, regardless of where he lived, according to the principle of *jus sanguinis*. Only when the People's Republic of China abandoned that notion of nationality did the Overseas Chinese develop their own particular ethnic identity.

Alas, there is no need to apologize for or to deny the existence of the sojourner. Despite his low station in society, he maintained his dignity. He earned whatever material gains he received in this country. He paid his dues – many times over. **Gold Mountain** is meant to be a tribute to those who came before us, to those who endured and survived, and in the process paved our way. Unfortunately, they are poorly served by Anthony Chan. The superficial portrayal of their experience does not do them justice. Perhaps when Mr. Chan decides to write their history, we will take him more seriously.

Jin Tan,
Toronto

翡翠爲您獻上歡樂假期
悉心安排回家省親渡假



香港 HONG KONG
台北 TAIPEI
經温哥華 $1180
經美國西岸 $1120
星馬 SINGAPORE MALAYSIA $1350

TORONTO 多倫多 (即文華邨)
Suite 109, 208-210 Spadina Ave.
Toronto, Ont. M5T 2W3
Tel: (416) 368-1721
如蒙惠顧 免費停車

MONTREAL 滿地可
1107 Clark St., Montreal, P.Q.
Tel: (514) 861-3497/8

〔1984〕
〔歐洲遊覽團〕
〔・全程華藉領隊・中西精美餐膳〕
〔復活節歐洲精選〕十九天
三月廿三日 四月十三日
$1,500連機票
・1984全新精美行程經已印備・
請與閣下相熟旅行社聯絡或來電索閱

翡翠旅行社 JADE TRAVEL LTD.

MOVEABLE TYPE

Digital Typesetting

We are a cooperatively-owned typesetting company offering the quality and precision of the latest in digital technology, at rates well below those of comparably-equipped type houses.

- excellent selection of text and display typefaces — over 100 typefaces in all.
- all our typefaces include accents for eight languages.
- horizontal and vertical rules, electronic condensing and expanding of any face, automatic reverses (white image on black background), and many more features. Full page make-up capability.
- discounts for non-profit organizations.

67 Mowat Ave., Suite 235
Toronto, Ontario M6K 3E3
Telephone: (416) 532-5690

Ask for Cathie or Joe.

NOW AVAILABLE

Directory of Asia Scholars in Canada/
Répertoire des Asianistes du Canada

(1983) 227 pages $16.

750 Asianists — their addresses and institutional affiliations — areas of interest — fields of teaching and research — arranged alphabetically and by regions of interest.

Order From:
Canadian Asian Studies Association
1321 Arts Tower, Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1S 5B6

ASIANADIAN ADVERTISING RATES
Effective 1st November 1983

SPACE	RATE/ISSUE	SPACE	RATE/ISSUE
1/12 pg.	$18	2/3 pg.	$105
1/8	25	3/4	115
1/6	32	1	150
1/4	45	Outside	
1/3	55	Back Cover*	300
1/2	80	Inside Cover	225

*Includes Front Cover Colours.
Discounts: 10%-2 issues; 15%-3 issues; 20%-4 issues
Special: Business Card under Classified Ads $18/issue

SUBSCRIBE NOW! «

DON'T miss this opportunity — subscribe to the **ASIANADIAN** and be here and now with us, keep current on the latest Asian Canadian affairs and issues, know what Asians are talking about these days, be here, and tell your friends you read it first in the **ASIANADIAN.**

THE ASIANADIAN, published quarterly by the Asianadian Resource Workshop, P.O. Box 1256, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 2P4

BACK ISSUES

Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1978: **Asian Canadian Sensibility**. Gerard Baba's Best of Both Worlds • Anthony Chan's Chinese Community in Canada: Teaching Resources • Interview with Maria Lee

Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer 1978: **Our History**. Lao Bo's Toronto Chinese (1880-1947) • Gao Wenxiong's Hamilton: The Chinatown That Died • Poems by Lakshmi Gill, Cyril Dabydeen, Sandy Jew, B. Kanbara, E.A.F. Lacaba

Vol. 1, No. 3, Fall/Winter 1978: **Women**. Kobayashi's Sexual Slavery in Canada • From Chapathies to Hamburgers • Dawn K. Ono's White Male Supremacy and the 'Oriental Doll'

Vol. 2, No. 1, Summer 1979: **Sexuality**. Gerald Chan's Out of the Shadows • A.C. Hori's Are the Sansei Avoiding Each Other • Interview with Joy Kogawa • Cheuk Kwan's You Don't Count Unless You're Counted

Vol. 2, No. 2, Fall 1979: **Children**. Bobby Siu's What Does Children's Liberation Mean • Joyce Gee's Why Can't They Understand Us • H.T. Ngo's From Saigon to Sudbury • Poems by Children

Vol. 2, No. 3, Winter 1979-80: **Political Movements**. T.T. Mao's Asianadia and the Anglo Left • M.L. Handa's The Struggle of South Asian Canadians • Cheuk Kwan's Foreign Threat That Never Was • Omatsu's War Measures Act 1914-1979 • Carol Matsui's Poems

Vol. 2, No. 4, Spring 1980: **Quebec**. Shima Okuda's Two Worlds Apart • W. Tse's Quebec Referendum and the Chinese People • Cheuk Kwan's Anti-W5 Movement • David's 'Prison' for Chinese Immigrants • Timur Khan's Separation: Bangladesh and Quebec

Vol. 3, No. 1, Summer 1980: **Media**. Richard Fung's TV Dinner in 24 Languages • Nancy Ing's Behind Golden Mountain • Bhaggiyadatta's Curried History • Shiomi's U.B.C. Co-ed Kidnapped Part I • J. Mavalwala's Aftermath of Misinformation • Sean Gunn's Lofawn Town • Bannerji's Poems

Vol. 3, No. 2, Fall 1980: **Vancouver**. Sky Lee's Gig Goes Island Crazy • Paul Yee's Morning Heat • Jim Wong-Chu's Poems and Photographs • Rick Shiomi's UBC Co-ed Kidnapped II • Interview with Pender Guy

Vol. 3, No. 3, Spring, 1981: **Poetry**. Poems by R. Crusz, S. Namjoshi, Ram Rajh, Stephen Gill, Matsui, Joy Kogawa, S. Jong, Sean Gunn, S. Padmanab, C. Dabydeen, S. Hussein, Nirmala Singh, Lakshmi Gill, A Weerasinghe

Vol. 3, No. 4, Summer, 1981: Chang's Chinese Pioneers in Newfoundland • L. Waxer's How The Noon Meal Got Its Name • D. Lee's Bridging East and West • Poetry by R. Miki

Vol. 4, No. 1, Fall, 1981: M. Wilkinson's Some Stayed On • R. Fung's From Brixton to Brazil • Anthony Chan's No Name China Jacks • K. Wan's Memoirs of a Chinese School Drop-Out • S. Singh Gill A Minority Within A Minority • M. Sugiman's Asian Women for Sale

Vol. 4, No. 2, Winter, 1982: B. Siu's The Bubble Bursts • A. Wong's Six Years in Canada • P. Khosla's Indian Mahila Association • Reviews: Joy Kogawa's Obasan, D. Blair's Writings by Women of China and Japan

Vol. 4, No. 3, October, 1982: Prem Ghosh's Interracial Relationships • Racial Harassment • Leonard Preyra's Ethnic Semantics • S. Dhar's India Bazaar • R. Fung's Festival of Festivals • Dora Nipp's Wayne Wang

Vol. 4, No. 4, December, 1982: M.G. Vassanji's Short Story • G. Wong's Learning English • V. Padmanabhan's Short Story • Khandwani's Muslims in Canada

Vol. 5, No. 1, April, 1983: Shin Imai's Japanese Canadian Reparation Campaign • Jan Bharati's Conflict in the East Indian Community in Toronto • A. Rahim's Is Oriental an O-ccident? • Fred Honn's Asian American Art

Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer-Fall 1983:
Interview with Dan Heap MP • Edy Goto's Program for Japanese Canadian Children • Ramcharan's Non-Whites in Canada • R. Fung's Interview with Lino Brocka • H. Bannerji's Review of Yellow Fever

ORDER FORM

	VOL.	CAN.$
☐ Nov, 1983	5.2	1.75
☐ Apr, 1983	5.1	1.50
☐ Dec, 1982	4.4	1.50
☐ Oct, 1982	4.3	1.50
☐ Winter, 1982	4.2	1.50
☐ Fall, 1981	4.1	1.50
☐ Summer, 1980	3.4	2.00
☐ Spring, 1981	3.3	2.00
☐ Fall, 1980	3.2	2.00
☐ Summer, 1980	3.1	2.00
☐ Spring, 1980	2.4	2.00
☐ Winter, 1979-80	2.3	2.00
☐ Fall, 1979	2.2	2.00
☐ Summer, 1979	2.1	2.00
☐ Spring, 1978	1.4	out of print 3.00
☐ Fall/Winter, 1978	1.3	3.00
☐ Summer, 1978	1.2	3.00
☐ Spring, 1978	1.1	3.00

SUBSCRIPTION RATES (Check one):

☐ One Year, Individual $ 7.00
☐ One Year, Institution $10.00
☐ Two Years, Individual $13.00
☐ Two Years, Institution $19.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ City: _____

Prov.: _____ Postal Code: _____

U.S. and overseas subscribers: add $3.00 per year.
Back issues: Postage and Handling Charges are extra. In Canada, add $1 for 1 copy and 25¢ per additional copy. In the U.S., add $1.50 for 1 copy and 30¢ per additional copy.

Return Postage Guaranteed

THE ASIANADIAN

P.O. Box 1256
Station Q
Toronto, Ontario
M4T 2P4
Canada

Second Class Mail
Registration Number
4438
Postage Paid At
Toronto, Canada